LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA

Screenplay by

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Story by

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Based on the book by Tadamichi Kuribayashi & Tsuyoko Yoshido

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FADE IN:

1 INT. IWO JIMA CAVE - DAY (2006) 1

A dark, but large cave in the depths of the Motoyama Mountains of Iwo Jima. The hand carved walls show striations of pick axes from many years past.

A PHOTOGRAPHER makes notes on his clipboard and takes flash pictures of labeled artifacts laid out on the floor -- a dust covered BOOT, a rusted and dented CANTEEN.

A group of JAPANESE EXCAVATORS wearing hard hats with the words "Association of Iwo Jima" emblazoned on them, carefully dig the floor with shovels.

The dirt is thrown into wooden boxes with rhythmic THUMPS, and carried out to be sifted.

Drenched with sweat and their faces red with exertion, the excavators wither under the humid heat.

EXCAVATOR #1
How did those soldiers dig out these tunnels in the first place?

Exhausted, Excavator #1 has to pause.

EXCAVATOR #1
Let's get a rotation in here.

He starts to leave.

EXCAVATOR #2
Wait a minute.

His shovel hits something which looks like a LEATHER SATCHEL.

The two Excavators take a closer look and carefully dig around the artifact.

2 EXT. IWO JIMA BEACH - CLOSE ON VARIOUS SHOVELS - DAY - (JUNE, 1944) 2

as they pierce the black sandy dirt of the beach. They dig in and lift.

The voice of PVT. KATSUHIRO SAIGO, in his thirties, reads a letter.

2 CONTINUED: 2

SAIGO (V.O.)
To Hanako. We soldiers dig. We dig all day. We dig holes where we are to stand when battle comes. Holes just big enough to stand in. Not wide enough to move forward or to move back. Holes where we are expected to fight and stay in until we die, for die we most likely will.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL --

An entire beach lined with trenches and SOLDIERS digging. The sun beats down on their sweat-drenched backs.

SUPERIMPOSE: IWO JIMA ISLAND, JUNE 1944.

Other soldiers maneuver artillery pieces into position or work on constructing bunkers and pillboxes -- buried huts for housing machine guns and antitank weapons.

SAIGO (V.O.)
Hanako, now I know what it feels like to dig my own grave.

Saigo wipes his face dirtied with the black sand. He has an unrefined look, but with kind eyes and an energetic demeanor. He's seen enough in life to either make him wise or a wise-ass.

A FLAG of the Japanese Navy & Army, bearing the sun motif with banded rays, flutters on the beach encampment.

Overhead, a PLANE approaches the island.

3 INT. PLANE HEADED TOWARDS IWO - DAY 3

LT. GENERAL TADAMICHI KURIBAYASHI, fifty-three, staunch and tall, with an air of regality, sits on a bench of the supply plane.

KURIBAYASHI (V.O.)
Today, I head for my post where my men are stationed. To avoid detection by the enemy, I take a supply plane and the hour of my arrival remains unannounced. My heart is as strong as that of General Kusonoki who gave his life for Japan 650 years ago at the Minato River.

3 CONTINUED: 3

Kuribayashi looks out a window as the plane descends.

KURIBAYASHI (V.O.)
I hope you and the children are well. I'm sorry I wasn't able to attend to the kitchen floor before I left. Make sure to have Taro take care of it as those drafts may give you a cold.

As the plane approaches Iwo Jima, the island materializes below like a large, brown pork chop. The distinct dome-shaped volcano, Mt. Suribachi, rises up out of the South end.

4 EXT. BACK ON IWO JIMA BEACH 4

The black-sanded beach is busy with the activity of soldiers.

The men dig at different intervals from one another. PVT. KASHIWARA digs in the hole next to Saigo's.

SAIGO
Damn this island! The Americans can have it.

He continues digging as he mutters.

SAIGO
Nothing grows here, it smells, it's hot, there are too many damn bugs and there's no water.

KASHIWARA
This island is part of Japan's sacred homeland.

SAIGO
There's nothing sacred about this island.

CAPTAIN TANIDA, late twenties, and sharply dressed, walks along the trenches inspecting. Kashiwara sees him and tries to warn Saigo.

KASHIWARA
Hey Saigo! Hey!

Saigo ignores Kashiwara as he continues grumbling.

4 CONTINUED: 4

SAIGO
We should just give this island to the Americans, and then we can go home.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
What did you say, soldier?

Saigo finally sees the Captain and puts his shovel down. Salutes.

SAIGO
Sir, I said if we beat the Americans, then we can go home.

Captain Tanida looks at Kashiwara.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
You there. Is that what he said?

Kashiwara seems helpless. There is a moment of hesitation.

KASHIWARA
Yes, sir.

5 EXT. AIRSTRIP - DAY 5

ADMIRAL OHSUGI, forties, waits patiently on the beach along with his OFFICER STAFF MEMBERS.

Finally, the war-torn plane drones in for a landing. It lands safely on the landing strip.

Kuribayashi steps off onto the tarmac. LT. FUJITA, twenties, Kuribayashi's personal aide, follows behind him.

They makes their way to Ohsugi and exchange salutes.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
Welcome, General Kuribayashi. I'm Admiral Ohsugi.

They bow politely.

KURIBAYASHI
How long have you been waiting here for me?

Ohsugi checks his watch.

5 CONTINUED: 5

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
Three hours, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
Sorry to hear. They wouldn't allow me to wire my arrival after what happened to Admiral Yamamoto.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
I understand, sir.

Kuribayashi turns to Lt. Fujita.

KURIBAYASHI
This is my aide, Lieutenant Fujita.

Admiral Ohsugi and Lt. Fujita bow to each other.

Ohsugi touches his stomach and grimaces.

KURIBAYASHI
What's the matter, Admiral? You don't look very well.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
Oh, it's nothing, sir. The water here does not agree with me.

KURIBAYASHI
Sorry to hear that.

Ohsugi motions the way.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
This way to your quarters.

KURIBAYASHI
Admiral, I want to make a round of the island first.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
Shall I fetch a jeep?

KURIBAYASHI
No, let's walk. Walking's good for the health. It might be just what you need, Ohsugi.

He chuckles, but Ohsugi does not look pleased.

They walk together, while the members of the staff walk a respectful 3 paces behind.

5 CONTINUED: (2) 5

Kuribayashi stops in front of a view of the cone-shaped volcano, MT. SURIBACHI on the South end of the island.

KURIBAYASHI
I could see it from the plane. Mt. Suribachi. That's the first place the Americans will want to take, Ohsugi.

6 BACK AT THE BEACH 6

Captain Tanida quickly finds a stick and whips Saigo and Kashiwara with it. The two grimace with the pain.

Tanida doesn't notice when Kuribayashi and his entourage pass by behind him.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
You no good peasants! Scums!

Kuribayashi approaches Captain Tanida, who immediately stands at attention and stops beating Saigo and Kashiwara.

KURIBAYASHI
Captain, what are you doing?

CAPTAIN TANIDA
These soldiers were conspiring with unpatriotic words, sir.

Kuribayashi looks over at the haggard looking soldiers.

KURIBAYASHI
I see. And Captain, do you have such an excess of soldiers that you can put two of them out of commission?

Captain Tanida is hesitant.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
No, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
Then stop beating them. Deny their lunch rations instead.

Ohsugi and Tanida look at each other, miffed.

KURIBAYASHI
A good captain uses his brain, not just his whip.

6 CONTINUED: 6

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Yes, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
And what is all this?

CAPTAIN TANIDA
This? Trenches, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
Why are the men digging trenches here?

Tanida looks to Ohsugi once again for support.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
This is where the Americans are expected to land, sir.

Kuribayashi looks at the men digging.

KURIBAYASHI
Have them stop immediately.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
But, sir...

KURIBAYASHI
If you had studied Tarawa, you would know that concentrating our defenses at the beach would be futile.

Captain Tanida is hesitant. Kuribayashi gives him a firm look. Captain Tanida turns towards the soldiers.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Stop digging!

The men stop and look up, surprised.

Kuribayashi turns to Captain Tanida.

KURIBAYASHI
And Captain, make sure these men get proper breaks. They look like they're from Mars.

7 EXT. ALONG TRENCHES - LATER 7

The soldiers sit on the sand, eating out of their mess kits. All except Saigo and Kashiwara who watch them hungrily.

7 CONTINUED: 7

Kashiwara rubs his stomach.

KASHIWARA
Just as well. My stomach's been bothering me anyway.

A soldier on water duty comes by with a pitcher, and they are allowed a tiny cupful, which they take gratefully.

SAIGO
A toast to General Kuribayashi. A fine commander.

Kashiwara drinks as well.

SAIGO
Mmmmm. Better than sake.

PVT. NOZAKI, another soldier in his thirties, comes to join them.

NOZAKI
I heard he lived in America. Maybe that's why he doesn't want us digging trenches. Maybe he likes the Americans.

SAIGO
No, stupid. He studied the Americans, so now he knows how to beat them.

NOZAKI
I heard from someone in the 204th that another general was supposed to command the island, but he didn't want the job, so Premier Tojo gave it to Kuribayashi instead.

SAIGO
You hear a lot of things, Nozaki, but your ears are full of wax!

Nozaki brushes him off.

SAIGO
Anyway, you can't trust anyone from the 204th. They're part of the Navy. I think this Kuribayashi must be a superb general. Look, we're not digging those damn trenches in the sand anymore, are we?

7 CONTINUED: (2) 7

Kashiwara's stomach makes a large GROWLING noise.

8 INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY 8

Kuribayashi inspects a map of Iwo Jima with defense plans marked.

Admiral Ohsugi and a stern looking Naval officer, LIEUTENANT ITO, are in the room with him.

KURIBAYASHI
How many planes do we have?

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
41 Zekes and 13 bombers.

KURIBAYASHI
Is that all?

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
We sent 66 planes to reinforce the fleet at Saipan.

Kuribayashi looks grave.

KURIBAYASHI
We will have to rely on support from the Combined Fleet.

He turns his attention to defense maps.

KURIBAYASHI
These are your defense plans?

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
Yes, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
And what about the army troops? Where will they be stationed?

Ohsugi hesitates.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
Well, sir, I don't know exactly. They are under the command of Col. Adachi.

Kuribayashi looks at him, surprised.

KURIBAYASHI
You haven't coordinated your plans?

8 CONTINUED: 8

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
Col. Adachi prefers that we do not interfere with each other's chain of command.

KURIBAYASHI
This is no time for childish games, Admiral. This is war.

Ohsugi feels the sting.

Kuribayashi sighs and goes back to looking at the map.

KURIBAYASHI
This will not work. You are concentrating all your efforts on the beaches. Move the artillery to higher ground.

LT. ITO
But sir, we just had them moved down to the beaches.

KURIBAYASHI
Well, move them back up. We'll need fortifications at Suribachi. Coordinate with Col. Adachi and have them start immediately.

LT. ITO
Yes, sir.

9 EXT. IWO CAMPGROUNDS - DAY 9

Admiral Ohsugi walks briskly with Lt. Ito, annoyed.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
This one's trouble.

Lt. Ito nods in agreement.

LT. ITO
Army commanders usually are, sir.

10 EXT. ALONG TRENCHES - LATER 10

Captain Tanida barks commands like a fierce little pit bull.

Saigo, Kashiwara and Nozaki stand to attention.

10 CONTINUED: 10

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Our new orders have come in for the day! Prepare for relocation!

11 EXT. MT. SURIBACHI BASE - DAY 11

The soldiers dig at the base of the volcano. The men are stripped to the waist in the heat. Now the dirt they dig is more like lava, still steaming with heat.

KASHIWARA
It stinks.

Saigo lifts up a dirt-full and some of it falls on his back.

SAIGO
Damn Kuribayashi!

KASHIWARA
Shhhh!

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Come on! Dig! Put your backs into it.

Saigo mutters to himself.

12 INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT 12

Kuribayashi inspects A MAP on the wall highlighting areas once occupied at the height of the Japanese Empire in 1943. The "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere."

The area stretches over a vast circle over the Pacific.

Covered with pins of Japanese flags, the map shows locations of strategic forces. White flags represent areas won back by the Allied forces. The white flags encroach on the Japanese flags.

13 EXT. TOKYO STREETS - NIGHT 13

SUPERIMPOSE: SHINJUKU, TOKYO

Under curfew, the streets of Tokyo are mostly dark and unlit.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI, a stern looking Kempeitai officer patrols the street.

13 CONTINUED: 13

Next to him is YOICHI SHIMIZU, 17. Everything about Shimizu is orderly and pristine, from his shiny boots, to his perfectly aligned cap.

Both wear a WHITE BAND on their left arm with kanji characters, "Ken" (law) and "Hei" (soldier) inscribed on them.

SHIMIZU (V.O.)
To mother. I am proud to say I graduated training with flying colors and I will be training under the guidance of Captain Iwasaki. It fills my heart with joy to serve my Emperor and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. You can rest assured there won't be any spies or Communists under my watch. Thank you for the rice crackers, but please don't send anymore. We must all conserve our food rations for the war effort. Luxury is the enemy. Saving is the road to victory.

A BICYCLIST rides through the main street, ringing his bell.

Captain Iwasaki yells at the Bicyclist as he passes them by.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
You there!

The Bicyclist halts.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
You should not be riding right in the middle of the street like that. What if there were an air raid or a military convoy coming through here?

The Bicyclist looks frightened. He bows in compliance.

BICYCLIST
I'm very sorry, sir.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
Get off to one side there.

The Bicyclist complies. Officer Iwasaki turns to Shimizu.

13 CONTINUED: (2) 13

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
Remember, Shimizu, as *Kempeitai*, you have all the authority, so don't be intimidated by a person's age. You have complete control.

SHIMIZU
Yes, sir.

They arrive at an office building with a signage Chuo Koron Magazine and bust the door open.

14 INT. OFFICE OF CHUO KORON (TOKYO) - LATER 14

Shimizu roughly rummages through PAPERS.

A JOURNALIST, late forties, watches nervously, while Captain Iwasaki stands before him.

JOURNALIST
What have I done?

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
You are suspected of violating the Peace Preservation Law.

Shimizu continues to go through papers and magazines, throwing useless ones on the floor.

JOURNALIST
Tell me which article it was. I'm sure I have complied to all the rules --

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
Be quiet!

The Journalist stands up.

JOURNALIST
Look, I have a family to support. Just let me know what it was and I'll retract the article.

He takes out his wallet and lays out his cash on the table. Shimizu looks at the cash, disgusted.

SHIMIZU
Do you think we can be bribed? How dare you insult us!

14 CONTINUED: 14

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
Shimizu, I'll find the articles. Take care of him.

Shimizu nods in compliance and strong-arms the Journalist.

JOURNALIST
Just a minute.

Shimizu leads him out the door as he protests. Captain Iwasaki deftly takes the money off the table and pockets it. Then he confiscates copies of the magazine *Chuo Koron*.

15 EXT. IWO CAMPGROUNDS - EVENING 15

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS YAMAZAKI mans the POSTAL TENT, relaxing with a copy of a magazine.

Saigo walks to him and hands over a letter.

PRIVATE YAMAZAKI
Another letter? You know that the mail only goes out when there's a boat available, don't you?

Saigo laughs, embarrassed.

SAIGO
I have a lot of family.

PRIVATE YAMAZAKI
Then how come all your letters are addressed to your wife?

Saigo gives him a look.

SAIGO
Nosey.

PRIVATE YAMAZAKI
Here let me do you a favor. Otherwise, your letters will never make it through.

He opens Saigo's letter.

SAIGO
Hey, what are you doing?

15 CONTINUED: 15

PRIVATE YAMAZAKI
I used to work at the Office of Censorship in Tokyo, you know, before I got transferred.

SAIGO
Transferred? You mean demoted?

Yamazaki tries to ignore the last comment. He reads the letter.

PRIVATE YAMAZAKI
(reading)
"To Hanako. We soldiers dig..."
No, no, no. This will never pass.

He starts crossing off lines of Saigo's letter.

SAIGO
Hey!

Private Yamazaki continues blacking out lines. Most of Saigo's letter is crossed out as he reads/mumbles the rest of the letter. He suddenly LAUGHS out loud.

SAIGO
Give me that back!

Yamazaki finishes crossing off the letter so that the only lines that remain are "To Hanako," and "Hope you are doing well."

PRIVATE YAMAZAKI
There. You'll thank me for this later, Saigo.

He seals the letter back up.

Saigo grumbles as he leaves.

16 EXT. IWO JIMA TRAINING GROUNDS - DAY 16

Saigo and the men have rifle practice. Each soldier gets their turn at hitting a bulls-eye.

Kuribayashi stands watching from a distance.

One of the soldier's gun jams and he fiddles with it. Another is slow to aim.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Faster!

16 CONTINUED: 16

Kuribayashi continues to watch, disappointment registering on his face.

When it's Saigo's turn, he aims his rifle. At the last minute, he jerks his gun. His shot is way off the mark.

Captain Tanida storms up to him and shouts in his ear.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Saigo, are you blind? Can't you see the target? Even my 6 year old could shoot better than you do.

Saigo bows his head in apology.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Do it again.

Saigo fumbles. He aims his rifle and once again, his shot is way off the mark.

Captain Tanida hits the back of his head.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
You're an embarrassment! You're a poor excuse for a soldier. Tonight, you will clean the boots of your entire troop. Go to the rear!

Kuribayashi turns to Lt. Fujita.

KURIBAYASHI
Better they should learn to clean their guns properly rather than their boots.

17 EXT. MOTOYAMA VILLAGE - DAY 17

General Kuribayashi, with a company of army soldiers, marches through the local village. Ever his shadow, Lt. Fujita marches alongside him.

It's a small town with a dusty main street, a bar, general store and single-story houses bedecked with banners.

Children, women and grandparents run out to greet the men with Rising Sun flags and cheer them on.

Kuribayashi notices a collection of idle TANKS in the village with a few ARMY MECHANICS working on them.

17 CONTINUED: 17

KURIBAYASHI
What are those tanks doing here?

LT. FUJITA
Those are out of commission, sir. They are waiting for parts.

KURIBAYASHI
Waiting for parts? How long have they been like this.

LT. FUJITA
I have been told about a month, sir.

Kuribayashi looks again at the tanks.

A LITTLE BOY of about four plays in the foreground with toy tanks.

18 FLASHBACK - EXT. BOSTON STREETS - DAY (1928) 18

The streets are jammed with cars, HONKING, and stalled in traffic.

Kuribayashi sits on a park bench with HARVARD UNIVERSITY in the b.g., a stack of textbooks beside him.

Kuribayashi sketches a picture of a car in a notebook.

KURIBAYASHI (V.O.)
To Taro, from Father. This is a picture of a car. America is filled with cars. I have to be very careful when crossing the streets. Cars come from every direction. Even my maid has a car. Japan has a lot of catching up to do with America.

Kuribayashi looks up again at the traffic jam.

KURIBAYASHI (V.O.)
Taro, are you minding your mother? I wish you were here with me.

Kuribayashi pulls out a picture of his young son, TARO.

END OF FLASHBACK.

19 EXT. MOTOYAMA VILLAGE - DAY 19

Kuribayashi is still focused on the young boy playing in front of the idle tanks. He turns to Fujita.

KURIBAYASHI
These civilians need to be evacuated as soon as possible.

LT. FUJITA
Yes, sir.

20 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - NIGHT 20

Saigo is busy cleaning stacks of shoes. Kashiwara approaches him with his own boots.

KASHIWARA
Saigo, I know that you must be a better shot than that after a year and a half.

Saigo doesn't look up from his cleaning.

SAIGO
I have no aim, that's all.

Kashiwara hesitates for a moment, shakes his head and leaves his boots.

21 EXT. BEACHES - DAY 21

Kuribayashi with walking stick in hand, makes his way briskly across the beach. He sees the mountains in the Northern hills and heads over towards them.

22 EXT. NORTH HILLS - DAY 22

Kuribayashi stares at the mountains, starts to climb up one of them.

He carefully ascends and peers into one of the natural caves.

23 EXT. MOTOYAMA VILLAGE - DAY 23

The village is now an empty ghost town. The flags have all been taken down, turning the city from colorful to monochromatic.

23 CONTINUED: 23

Only bits of litter remain, scattering in the wind.

Saigo and other members of his troop tear down a school house, collecting the wood into piles.

Captain Tanida inspects another nearby structure.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
We can use the wood from this one as well.

All the men stop when they hear the sound of a GALLOPING HORSE. They turn to see BARON TAKEICHI NISHI, tall, handsome and gallant, riding with gusto towards them.

SAIGO (V.O.)
Hanako, we have a celebrity in our midst. Do you remember Baron Nishi, the Olympic gold medalist in horse jumping? He has just arrived from Tokyo and is stationed here as Commander of the 26th Tank Regiment.

The men watch as he rides full speed, and hurdles over a fence. A study in grace and agility.

The men CLAP. Baron Nishi smiles and salutes them as he rides on.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Get back to work, men.

Baron Nishi nearly mows Captain Tanida over as he gallops away.

SAIGO (V.O.)
Lieutenant Colonel Nishi is very handsome, so I'm sure the rumors of his womanizing skills must be true, but there are no women left on the island to woo. He is friendly with the troops and sometimes talks casually among them. Strange for a Lieutenant.

SOUND CROSSOVER TO:

24 EXT. IWO JIMA BEACHES - DAY 24

Kuribayashi walks along the sand with his walking stick. He stops when he sees Baron Nishi approaching, sand flying from his horse's heels.

24 CONTINUED: 24

Baron Nishi dismounts his horse, his spurred boots CLINKING as they hit the ground. He salutes Kuribayashi.

General Kuribayashi walks up to Baron Nishi and they shake hands like Westerners.

KURIBAYASHI
Lieutenant Colonel Nishi. I used to be a cavalryman myself, you know.

BARON NISHI
Yes, of course. I've been looking forward to serving under you. One who understands horses the way I do.

KURIBAYASHI
Those were the days, when soldiers could ride in on horses. Not these mechanized contraptions.

Kuribayashi admires the horse.

BARON NISHI
I could send for another horse and we could ride together, General.

KURIBAYASHI
I'm afraid my riding days are over, Nishi. But tell me about this famous horse of yours that you won the Olympics with.

BARON NISHI
My stallion, Uranus?

He pulls out a picture of Uranus, a stallion of Anglo-Norman stock, and shows it to Kuribayashi.

KURIBAYASHI
That's a fine horse.

BARON NISHI
The Italians thought I was doing them a favor, getting rid of him to me. No one could tame the beast, but I told them 'If that's a really headstrong horse, it's just the one for me, a headstrong man.'

They share a laugh.

24 CONTINUED: (2) 24

KURIBAYASHI
I'm dying for some news from the mainland on the war effort. We mostly just hear what they filter on the radio broadcasts.

BARON NISHI
I understand. It's hard to know what's really going on these days.

KURIBAYASHI
Dine with me tonight. And if you have brought any sake back with you, that would be a double welcome.

BARON NISHI
I think that can be arranged, sir.

25 INT. OFFICER'S QUARTERS - NIGHT 25

Kuribayashi and Baron Nishi sit at a table with cups of sake before them.

The COOK enters and serves them plates of fish and rice. He then continues to place empty plates on the table.

KURIBAYASHI
Is that still really necessary?

COOK
Regulations, sir.

Baron Nishi looks at Kuribayashi questioningly.

KURIBAYASHI
I have told our cook that all officers will have the same rations and food as our men.

The Cook looks flustered.

COOK
It is not right. Officers should not eat the same food.

KURIBAYASHI
Apparently, military regulations dictates that officers must be served at least three dishes.

25 CONTINUED: 25

COOK
That's right. At least three dishes. This is a travesty, sir. I am very ashamed.

The Cook finishes placing the empty dishes.

KURIBAYASHI
So as a compromise, I told him he could bring out empty dishes.

The Cook bows and exits.

KURIBYASHI
He's a stubborn son of a bitch. I had to give in to him.

Kuribayashi and Nishi LAUGH. Kuribayashi jovially pours another cup of sake in Baron Nishi's cup.

KURIBAYASHI
We will defeat the enemy this time, Nishi. It will be different from past island battles.

BARON NISHI
I'm sure it will be, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
After all, *Iwo Tou* is part of Japanese soil.

Kuribayashi sips his sake.

KURIBAYASHI
When the enemy arrive, we will contain them, and then our Combined Fleet will take them out. Blast them back to America.

Baron Nishi turns grave and is silent for a moment.

BARON NISHI
General, there is no longer any Combined Fleet.

KURIBAYASHI
What do you mean?

BARON NISHI
I guess you haven't heard about what happened with Operation A-Go ten days ago.

(MORE)

25 CONTINUED: (2) 25

BARON NISHI (cont'd)
Most of Admiral Ozawa's carrier planes and float planes were destroyed off the Marianas. We still have some scattered naval forces, but there will be no striking power from the air, or sea for that matter.

Kuribayashi looks dark, then laughs.

KURIBAYASHI
You must be drunk. This island is under the jurisdiction of the city of Tokyo. We'll get our support.

BARON NISHI
If you want my honest opinion, the best thing to do would be to sink this island to the bottom of the sea.

Baron Nishi takes a large gulp of the sake. Kuribayashi is speechless, his jovial mood wiped out.

KURIBAYASHI
And yet, you still came.

BARON NISHI
Well, I figured your men were going to need all the tanks I could bring.

This brings a light smile back.

26 INT. PLANNING ROOM - NIGHT 26

Kuribayashi looks over the strategic plans. He slowly removes all air attack force plans from the table model. He stands over the table in grave contemplation, then angrily pulls strategic PLAN PAPERS off the wall.

27 EXT. IWO JIMA BEACH - DAY 27

Kuribayashi strides along the beach with Fujita behind him.

KURIBAYASHI
This beach is wide. Yes, the enemy must land here. They have no alternative.

Kuribayashi rushes the beach. Fujita watches him, perplexed.

27 CONTINUED: 27

KURIBAYASHI
Fujita!

LT. FUJITA
Sir!

KURIBAYASHI
Run along the beach there.

LT. FUJITA
Sir?

KURIBAYASHI
Like you're one of the Americans. Go on. Which direction would you take?

Fujita contemplates for a minute, then rushes up towards the airfield.

Kuribayashi quickly takes up a position and aims his walking stick at Fujita, pretending to shoot, moves around, looks for another vantage point.

He looks at the surroundings, measuring where the best positions would be.

KURIBAYASHI
Okay, come from the other side.

Fujita complies. Kuribayashi takes up another position and mock shoots him again.

28 EXT. SLOPES OF SURIBACHI - DAY 28

Kashiwara and Saigo stare in awe at the beach activity.

KASHIWARA
I think your general is a bit nuts.

Captain Tanida strides up the slopes barking commands.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Break time is over! Back to work!

The men get up immediately. Kashiwara suddenly bowls over from a cramp. Saigo looks at him concerned.

SAIGO
You don't look so good. Are you all right?

28 CONTINUED: 28

KASHIWARA
It's fine. Just the damn water, I'm sure. But I really need to go.

He quickly makes his way to a discrete location behind the mountain.

29 EXT. MOTOYAMA HILLS - DAY 29

Kuribayashi walks along the hillside with a gaggle of Officers struggling to keep up with him.

Admiral Ohsugi, aging 57-year-old COLONEL ADACHI and MAJ. GENERAL SATO are among them.

Finally, Kuribayashi comes to a stop and turns to the officers.

KURIBAYASHI
Our strategy will be to take a defensive position and use the terrain to our advantage. We will build caves and tunnels in the mountains, place our artillery along this ridge and Suribachi.

COL. ADACHI
What about the beaches?

KURIBAYASHI
The men will have a clear view of the beaches from Suribachi and Motoyama. There is no need to fortify the beaches.

GENERAL SATO
General Kuribayashi, you must understand that the trenches are the first line of defense. We must resume work on the beaches.

KURIBAYASHI
General, do you know how many cars America produces in a year? Five million. Five million cars, General. The American forces and their technological advancements should not be underestimated. The Americans will cross the beaches eventually and the soldiers' lives will be needlessly wasted there.

29 CONTINUED: 29

COL. ADACHI
It's inevitable that men will die. But I've never heard of an island operation without a line of defense at the beaches.

KURIBAYASHI
And how long did our guns last along the beaches at Saipan and Guam? Will you please show me just how effective the beach pillboxes at Tarawa were?

The officers are silent for a moment.

GENERAL SATO
So we build tunnels and caves in the mountains?

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
It will be a futile waste of time. The men cannot dig through a mountain. Besides, what kind of war is fought in caves?

GENERAL SATO
The strategy should be to force the ships in for a heavy air attack.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
I agree. That makes the most sense. We will have support from our Combined Fleet.

Kuribayashi is quiet for a beat.

KURIBAYASHI
We can no longer count on our Combined Fleet.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
What do you mean?

KURIBAYASHI
The Combined Fleet has been broken.

The officers look at each other with gravity.

29 CONTINUED: (2) 29

KURIBAYASHI
What's more, I received an order on the wire this morning that all our remaining planes are to be sent back to Tokyo to defend the mainland.

GENERAL SATO
We won't be able to last five days without air support.

KURIBAYASHI
We will hold the island as long as possible, no matter the outcome. Once the Americans take *Iwo Tou*, they will have a clear route for their bombing runs. But if we can draw out the battle, hold this island for at least 20 days, the Americans will think twice about attacking Japan.

30 EXT. RAIN COLLECTION SITE - DAY 30

RAIN comes down in torrents, a tropical storm in the midst of the heat.

Tarps that have been put up to collect the water fill up with the rain.

Soldiers transfer the water from the tarp into buckets and haul them to camp.

31 EXT. IWO JIMA AIRSTRIP - DAY 31

Another rainy day on the island.

SUPERIMPOSE: DECEMBER, 1944

Shimizu steps off an air carrier along with other soldiers. He looks around him, carrying his pack.

SHIMIZU (V.O.)
To mother, today I am to join my new unit. I know you have been wondering about my transfer. This is something I cannot discuss now, but I will explain to you some day.

32 INT. TROOP'S CAVE - DAY (DEC. 1944) 32

The soldiers lie on their bedrolls, reading books, writing letters or mending their uniforms. Even though it's winter, the men are stripped to their undershirts and try to fan themselves in the heat.

Saigo reads a BOOK with pictures of Egypt on the cover.

Saigo shows Nozaki a page from the book.

SAIGO
Look at this picture.

NOZAKI
That's some fancy castle.

SAIGO
You know who that castle was made for? Somebody who was already dead.

NOZAKI
They must have had a lot of money back then to make a castle like that for a dead person. Why are you reading a book about Egypt anyway? We're never going to war over there.

SAIGO
(ignoring)
We'll be lucky if we even get a hole in the ground when we're dead.

NOZAKI
Don't talk about that. It's bad luck.

Shimizu enters the cave. Despite the rain, his uniform still looks crisp and clean.

NOZAKI
Here comes the new recruit.

SHIMIZU
Is this the 312th?

SAIGO
That's right.

Saigo continues reading his book.

32 CONTINUED: 32

NOZAKI
I'm Nozaki. This is Saigo.

SHIMIZU
Shimizu, Yoichi.

NOZAKI
You can put your bedroll there, Shimizu.

He points to an empty space. Shimizu is about to put his bedroll down, but Saigo tries to prevent him.

SAIGO
There's another empty space at the back end of the cave.

NOZAKI
(to Shimizu)
Don't mind him. His friend Kashiwara just died. That used to be his spot.

Shimizu methodically puts his bedroll out, where Kashiwara's spot used to be.

SAIGO
But we are all going to die. That's our plan, isn't it?

SHIMIZU
If it serves the country, it is a death of honor.

SAIGO
Kashiwara died of honorable dysentery.

NOZAKI
Where are you from, Shimizu?

SHIMIZU
From Kanagawa-ken.

NOZAKI
Kanagawa-ken. Ozawa is from there, aren't you?

OZAWA, a young soldier in his twenties, nods his head.

OZAWA
That's right. Where did you train? Maybe we were at the same camp.

32 CONTINUED: (2) 32

Shimizu is hesitant.

SHIMIZU
No, I trained in Tokyo.

NOZAKI
I trained in Tokyo, too. What camp was it?

Shimizu is hesitant again.

SHIMIZU
The *Koho Kimmu Yoin Yoseijo*.

Everyone becomes silent. Shimizu turns to continue unpacking his bedroll.

Nozaki quickly leaves his vicinity and sidles up to Saigo.

NOZAKI
Why do you think they put a *Kempeitai* in our unit?

SAIGO
He's not wearing the white arm band. He's not *Kempeitai*.

NOZAKI
He went to the *Kempeitai* military academy.

SAIGO
Maybe he flunked out.

Nozaki notices a holstered PISTOL on Shimizu's belt.

NOZAKI
He acts like a *Kempeitai*. And look at his holster. That's not standard issue. And are riflemen even supposed to have pistols? He's been put here to spy on us.

SAIGO
Why would he spy on us?

NOZAKI
Maybe it's those letters you've been writing. I think you should be careful what you say, Saigo.

32 CONTINUED: (3) 32

Saigo looks worried. They watch Shimizu. He sits down and pulls out a small mirror, checks his closely cropped hair. He jumps up suddenly with a YELL.

A CENTIPEDE crawls on him.

Nozaki and Saigo try to suppress their smirks.

Shimizu looks embarrassed. He stomps on the insect angrily.

33 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - DAY 33

The soldiers line up for their lunchtime rations. They each get a bowl of soup with weeds floating in them.

SAIGO
Weed soup again?

They look over towards Shimizu, who stands behind them in line.

NOZAKI
Kuribayashi's conserving our food supplies for the battle.

Saigo and Nozaki sit down.

Shimizu sits slightly apart from the rest of the men. He looks at his soup, trying to suppress his shock. He digs in and eats without comment.

Saigo looks at Shimizu and then back into his soup.

SAIGO
We'll be dead before the Americans even get here. And you would think with all my war effort contributions, we should be eating *kasutera* cakes or sandwiches.

NOZAKI
What?

SAIGO
I ran a bakery shop in Tokyo with my wife. We sold *kasutera* and *ampan* cakes, back when we could still get sugar.

Saigo motions towards Shimizu.

33 CONTINUED: 33

SAIGO
His *kempeitai* brethren used to come in and take what they wanted. Said it was for the war effort.

NOZAKI
We ran in to those types at our clothing store as well.

SAIGO
When we started making sandwiches, they took those too. And when we ran out of meat and just had bread, they still came. Finally, they took our baking equipment for the metal and we were out of business.
(a beat)
I should have been a fisherman.

NOZAKI
It must be hard on your wife without the shop and without a husband.

34 FLASHBACK - INT. BAKERY SHOP, ENTRANCE - DAY (1943) 34

HANAKO sweeps the floor of the empty bakery shop, pausing to rub her swollen belly.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

INT. BAKERY SHOP - BACK RESIDENCE - DAY

Saigo sits on a mat on the floor reading a book.

SAIGO
Tell them to go away. We have nothing to sell.

BAKERY SHOP - ENTRANCE

Hanako opens the door. Her face turns pale.

SAIGO (V.O.)
Who is it?

A CITY CLERK and WOMEN FROM THE PATRIOTIC WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION, wearing governmental sashes stand at the door.

CONTINUED:

The City Clerk holds out a red letter. He bows with the letter outstretched in his hand. Hanako stares at it and does not take it.

LEAD WOMAN
Congratulations. Your husband's going to war.

Saigo comes to the door. He also turns pale when he sees the red letter, but tries to compose himself. He takes it and bows to them.

SAIGO
Thank you very much. I'm happy to serve the nation.

The LEAD WOMAN, in her forties, steps forward.

LEAD WOMAN
Prayers for your eternal success at arms.

HANAKO
Please. We have only each other.

Lead Woman gives Hanako a look of anger.

SAIGO
Hanako, go to the back, dear.

HANAKO
He's already been to war once.

LEAD WOMAN
We have all sent our husbands to war, Mrs. Saigo. And our sons. We all have to do our part.

She looks at Hanako's belly.

LEAD WOMAN
At least you'll have a little one to carry on your name.

35 INT. BAKERY SHOP - NIGHT 35

Saigo and Hanako sit across from each other at the dinner table. There is a meager ration of rice gruel and dried fish. Hanako is unable to eat and weeps silently.

Saigo puts his chopsticks down.

35 CONTINUED: 35

SAIGO
Hanako, I can't taste the food with you like that.

HANAKO
What am I going to do after you die?

SAIGO
Am I already in the coffin?

HANAKO
The men never come back. Don't you see all the black streamers flying in our village? They never come back. They're not supposed to come back.

She weeps some more. Saigo comes over to her side.

SAIGO
I know.

HANAKO
And now, with the baby...

She leans into him.

HANAKO
I'm scared.

Saigo bends over and puts his ear to her stomach, then talks to it.

SAIGO
Hey, little baby. This is your father speaking. Let me tell you a secret. You're not to repeat this to anyone, okay?
(whispering)
I plan to come back.

Hanako brightens when she hears this.

END OF FLASHBACK.

36 EXT. MOTOYAMA CAVES - DAY (1944) 36

The sound of PICK AXES CLANGING against STONE WALLS emanates from a complex network of multilevel caves and tunnels in the Motoyama mountainside.

36 CONTINUED: 36

Saigo, Nozaki and Shimizu work in a separate area where sulfurous HOT STEAM rises from the rocks. They wear GAS MASKS to protect themselves.

The mountain is like a busy anthill where men dig, remove, cart and carry.

Baron Nishi, still wearing his spurred boots, directs his men on camouflaging tanks in gunner positions.

Kuribayashi looks at his plans, comparing the work to his map.

He remains unnoticed by Admiral Ohsugi and Lt. Ito as he walks behind them.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
This is ridiculous. Why waste time digging these impossible caves when they are all going to die anyway?

LT. ITO
At least he has conceded to the pillboxes on the beaches.

Kuribayashi continues to walk on.

37 INT. OFFICER'S QUARTERS - NIGHT 37

General Kuribayashi sits at his desk, writing a memo. Admiral Ohsugi enters.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
You wanted to see me, sir?

KURIBAYASHI
Yes, Admiral.

Kuribayashi continues writing and Admiral Ohsugi has to wait patiently. Finally, Kuribayashi looks up.

KURIBAYASHI
Admiral Ohsugi, you have been looking quite pale these days.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
It's the water. It has never agreed with me.

KURIBAYASHI
I think you need to go back to Tokyo to recoup.

37 CONTINUED: 37

Kuribayashi hands him the memo.

Admiral Ohsugi looks at it and is momentarily speechless.

KURIBAYASHI
I have just commissioned Admiral Ichimaru to take your place.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
General, the island won't last more than five days without fleet support. I'm not alone in thinking the cave work is... futile.

Kuribayashi stands up from the table, angered.

KURIBAYASHI
The cave digging may be futile. Maybe the stand on *Iwo Tou* will be futile. Maybe the whole war is futile. But will you give up then? What will we tell the people of Japan? Admiral Ohsugi, we will stay and hold this island until we die, until every last breath of us is expired. If my children can live to see one more day of a free Japan, that would be worth the one more day that we suffer instead of surrender. So don't tell me that the cave work is futile.

He sits back down. Admiral Ohsugi looks defeated.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
I'm sorry, General. I was mistaken.

KURIBAYASHI
You are dismissed.

Admiral Ohsugi turns and walks out.

38 EXT. HORSE PEN - DAY 38

Fresh from a ride, Baron Nishi fondly brushes his horse's coat.

BARON NISHI
Hey, Jupiter. That's a good boy.

39 EXT. CAMPGROUND - DAY 39

Admiral Ohsugi walks in the direction of the airstrip. Behind him, his AIDE follows, carrying his bags.

General Sato sees him on the way. They stop and salute each other.

GENERAL SATO
It's true then. I didn't believe it when I heard.

Admiral Ohsugi tries not to show his humiliation.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
I'm glad to be gone from this island.

GENERAL SATO
We may have had our differences, but I'm truly sorry to see you go.

Admiral Ohsugi starts on his way again, then stops.

ADMIRAL OHSUGI
General Sato, it's up to you now. I hate to say it, but Kuribayashi belongs back behind a desk at the Imperial Palace, not commanding a war.

Baron Nishi emerges from the horse pen and overhears the two talking.

General Sato nods.

GENERAL SATO
I understand. There are many of us whose sentiments are with you.

Ohsugi continues on.

40 EXT. OUTDOOR INSTRUCTIONAL HUT - DAY 40

Saigo, Shimizu and Nozaki sit in a hut for an instructional lecture, with Captain Tanida speaking.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
The Americans are likely to land here.

He points to the South beach on a map of Iwo.

40 CONTINUED: 40

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Cross fire positions will be here, here and here.

He points to Motoyama and Suribachi.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Now, to be truthful, we will likely be outnumbered by the Americans in troop size and air and naval support. But we have a great advantage. Can anyone tell me what that is?

The soldiers look at each other at a loss, still trying to digest the fact that they will be outnumbered in all aspects.

Finally, Shimizu stands up.

SHIMIZU
The Americans are weak-willed and inferior to Japanese soldiers.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Very good, Shimizu. Why is that?

SHIMIZU
They are not as disciplined and let their feelings interfere with their fighting.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
That is correct.

Saigo and Nozaki give each other looks, distrustful of Shimizu.

Captain Tanida displays a picture of a uniformed American medic.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Here is the uniform of an American medic. He should be your target, for Americans will risk the lives of many soldiers to save this one.

41 INT. COMMAND HUT - DAY 41

Kuribayashi stands, looking at the map of the Empire. The number of white flags has proliferated, while the Japanese flags have diminished.

41 CONTINUED: 41

Kuribayashi turns towards Baron Nishi.

KURIBAYASHI
What is it that you wanted to tell me?

BARON NISHI
I just thought I'd warn you, sir, to keep an eye on your commanders.

KURIBAYASHI
Thank you for your concern, Nishi, but I have it under control. Admiral Ohsugi is gone and I trust General Sato and Colonel Adachi will keep things in order.

Baron Nishi looks unconvinced.

ADMIRAL ICHIMARU, the new naval officer, walks into the command hut. His right leg has been injured from a previous war wound, and he limps as he walks in.

ADMIRAL ICHIMARU
Admiral Ichimaru reporting for duty, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
Ah, Admiral Ichimaru.

BARON NISHI
Excuse me.

He bows to them and starts to leave, when the WAIL of an AIR RAID SIREN interrupts their greetings. The SIRENS are immediately followed by the DRONE of approaching B-24s.

Kuribayashi grabs his paperwork. The men quickly make their way out of the tent.

42 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - DAY 42

Saigo and the rest of the troop get up and run quickly from the huts seeking shelter.

The squadron of planes descends upon them. STRAFING FIRE riddles the earth.

Saigo and Nozaki jump behind a large rock formation.

Shimizu finds shelter in a nearby trench.

42 CONTINUED: 42

As they watch, the SAND EXPLODES before them in black plumes. The men cover their heads from the falling debris.

A BOMB disintegrates the instructional tent that the men have just escaped.

BOMBS continue to fall like explosive rain around the island.

The command hut is ablaze in a orange plume of fire.

Finally, the bombing stops.

Baron Nishi emerges from one of the trenches.

BARON NISHI
Jupiter!

43 EXT. HORSE PEN - DAY 43

Baron Nishi rushes out to the pen. The horse lies dead on the ground.

Baron Nishi goes over to it. Falls on his knees, devastated. Pets its neck.

44 CAMPGROUNDS 44

The men start cleaning up the debris.

Saigo picks up planks of wood when he sees Private Yamazaki in the distance, sitting upright. He approaches him.

SAIGO
Hey. Hey, Yamazaki. What are you doing just sitting there? Help us out here.

Yamazaki does not respond.

Saigo gets closer to him and reels back in horror. Yamazaki's skull has been blasted out of his head, leaving his distorted face.

45 INT. TROOP'S CAVE - NIGHT (FEBRUARY, 1945) 45

More AERIAL BOMB BLASTS can be heard outside the caves. Saigo, Shimizu, Nozaki, Ozawa and other troop members bide their time in their sleeping quarters.

45 CONTINUED: 45

Shimizu writes a letter.

SHIMIZU (V.O.)
To mother. We are being bombarded daily by B-24s. They fly at an altitude too high to be reached by our anti-aircraft guns. Officer Tanida estimates there have been over 20,000 shells on this tiny island. When the Americans finally arrive, we'll give them our own Hell.

The men look haggard, with rings under their eyes from lack of sleep.

Nozaki approaches Saigo, motions towards Shimizu.

NOZAKI
I think he's writing about us. In his reports.

SAIGO
He's just writing a letter. It's been two months, Nozaki. He would have reported us by now.

NOZAKI
How can you be sure?

They watch Shimizu.

The GROUND RUMBLES with another bomb blast.

OZAWA
Will they ever stop? Day and night. Day and night. It's driving me nuts!

A TIRED SOLDIER in his thirties, tries to sleep in his bedroll, covering his ears.

Another EXPLOSION causes debris to rain down from the cave walls.

The Tired Soldier finally gets up angrily.

TIRED SOLDIER
If the damn Americans are going to invade, why don't they hurry up and land already?

46 INT. OFFICER'S QUARTERS - NIGHT 46

The BOMBING NOISES are more distant in the deeper and larger cave of the Officer's Quarters.

Kuribayashi sits at his desk. He doodles a drawing on a letter he has written.

KURIBAYASHI (V.O.)
Tako-chan. Your last letter was written very well. You used some very big words. You've grown very wise and I am very happy. You made just five errors in your kanji. This is a picture of your father walking around the island.

Kuribayashi looks at a portrait of his family--his wife, sone and two daughters. Lt. Fujita enters the cave holding a wire.

LT. FUJITA
General, the fleet of American ships have left Saipan.

Kuribayashi stands to receive the note.

KURIBAYASHI
So they are on their way. Have all beach positions manned and ready for action.

LT. FUJITA
Yes, sir.

47 INT. PLANNING ROOM - DAY 47

Kuribayashi turns on a microphone. Outside BOMBS continue to be dropped.

KURIBAYASHI
Men, the time has come at last to show your true colors. To fight as honorable men of the Imperial Japanese Army.

48 INTERCUT - PLANNING ROOM/TROOP'S CAVE 48

Saigo, Shimizu and Nozaki stand at attention, as they listen to Kuribayashi's voice over the LOUDSPEAKER.

48 CONTINUED: 48

KURIBAYASHI
Iwo Tou is of utmost importance to our Nippon. If the army takes this island, they will land their planes here, refuel and fly their bombs to the homeland. They will attack our villages and destroy them with fire bombs. For the sake of our homeland, we must delay them as long as possible. We cannot expect to return home.

Saigo and Nozaki look at each other, the last sentence confirming what they fear.

KURIBAYASHI
For 5000 years, no foreign army has desecrated the land of Japan. All of you must fight like *Nipponjin*. In the name of our fathers who held back the Russian marauders at Port Arthur and Mukden, and our forefathers before that who fought against the invasions of the mongols over 600 years ago, I ask each of you to defend this island to the limit of your strength. No man must die until he has killed at least ten Americans. We will hold *Iwo Tou* until the last of us has perished. Long live the Emperor!

The MEN raise their hands in the air.

MEN
Long live the Emperor! *Banzai! Banzai! Banzai!*

49 TROOP'S CAVE - LATER 49

Nozaki pulls out his money. A few bills and some coins. He pours them into an envelope.

Other soldiers follow suit, collecting money and small trinkets of value, folding them into letters.

Saigo similarly places his bills into an envelope.

50 EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - NIGHT 50

The armada of American ships makes its way.

51 INT. BARON NISHI'S QUARTERS - NIGHT 51

Baron Nishi composes a letter.

BARON NISHI (V.O.)
Keep warm and safe. I will fight courageously in the spirit of Yamato. Do not expect my return. In the end, I would just like to say, my heart has always been with you. Takeichi.

SOUND CROSSOVER TO:

52 INT. TROOP'S CAVES - NIGHT 52

A soldier passes out clean socks and towels.

The men strip, changing into clean clothes.

One by one, the men face a religious altar adorned with zig-zag strips of paper (*gohei*). They bow before it.

53 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S QUARTERS - NIGHT 53

Kuribayashi is contemplative as he looks over letters sent from his family -- the scrawl of his youngest daughter, the elegant calligraphy of his wife's hand and finally, the bold strokes from his son.

He slowly folds them and takes out his pen.

KURIBAYASHI (V.O.)
Taro, I will fight as a son of Kuribayashi, the Samurai, and will behave in such a manner as to deserve the name of Kuribayashi. Now is the time for you to step up and lead the family. The life of your father is like a flicker of flame before the wind.

54 INT. TROOP'S CAVES - NIGHT 54

Saigo picks up a cotton BELT with numerous stitchings. He puts it on and boasts to Nozaki.

SAIGO
No one can shoot me now.

54 CONTINUED: 54

Nozaki looks at it.

NOZAKI
That's a nice belt. My wife sent me one too.

Nozaki picks up a similar belt. He looks around the room. Some of the other soldiers have similar belts.

He looks at Shimizu.

NOZAKI
Doesn't look like Mr. *Kempeitai* has a thousand-stitch belt, does he?

SAIGO
Maybe he thinks it will clash with his uniform. He probably doesn't believe in superstitions, anyway.

Shimizu finally picks up a similarly stitched belt.

NOZAKI
His mother made him one after all.

55 EXT. IWO JIMA ISLAND - DAY 55

The island is clouded in LARGE BLACK PLUMES as it is pounded relentlessly by planes flying sorties, dropping mega-ton BOMBS.

56 INT. SURIBACHI CAVE - DAY 56

Saigo's unit is amassed at their position in the volcano dressed in uniform, some wearing their thousand-stitch belts.

The entire GROUND SHAKES with each BOMB. Saigo and Nozaki can barely keep upright after each blast.

NOZAKI
Maybe they're trying to sink the island.

SAIGO
My head hurts.

NOZAKI
How many ships do you think there are out there?

56 CONTINUED: 56

SAIGO
At least 30. Maybe even 50.

NOZAKI
They must be really close.

Saigo gets up.

SAIGO
I need to take a leak.

NOZAKI
Don't go near the sewers. I heard dysentery is spreading through there.

SAIGO
Where do I go then?

NOZAKI
There's a pot, at the end of the cave.

Saigo takes off.

57 INT. SURIBACHI CAVE - EARLY MORNING 57

The troops eat their morning ration of porridge.

Captain Tanida enters, adjusting his pants.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Someone needs to go throw out the shit pot.

The men put their heads down, concentrating on their food, trying not to be picked.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Saigo!

Saigo reluctantly gets up.

SAIGO
Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
And Saigo, if anything happens to that pot, you'll be carrying our shit away with your hands.

SAIGO
Yes, sir.

58 INT. END CAVE - MORNING 58

Saigo picks up the CHAMBER POT, holding it at a distance with disgust. He makes his way through a --

CAVE NETWORK

-- and finally comes to an -- OUTLET.

59 EXT. MT. SURIBACHI - MORNING 59

Saigo carefully navigates around the base of Suribachi.

He comes to a crag and dumps the filthy contents of the bowl.

Saigo looks up to see the ARMADA OF SHIPS -- an imposing mass of 485 ships converged around the island.

The sight of the enormous fleet causes Saigo to drop the bowl. It tumbles down into a crevice.

SAIGO
No!

Saigo reaches down into the crevice, tries to retrieve the bowl, but can't reach it.

SAIGO
Damn!

Suddenly, a WHISTLING NOISE causes Saigo to run for cover. A BOMB EXPLODES, sending sand flying in the air.

PUFFS OF WHITE SMOKE off the ships convey that a SHOOTING BARRAGE has begun.

Dark FIREBALLS and GEYSERS of black sand and rubble ERUPT over the landscape.

Saigo crawls back towards the crevice and tries to reach down again without success. He looks up to the Heavens.

SAIGO
Is this some kind of joke? What kind of God are you? Making us suffer like this! You're probably laughing aren't you? You think this is funny.

59 CONTINUED: 59

Saigo looks around and finds a STICK. He fishes down in the crevice and catches the bowl on the end of the stick.

Carefully, carefully, he raises the stick, balancing the bowl on it.

A BOMB EXPLODES in the sand yards away from him. But determined, Saigo manages to keep it steady.

At last he pulls it up and takes it with relief, then runs for the caves.

As he runs, a BOMB SHELL falls in his path.

Saigo drops into the sand, still holding the pot, bracing for the explosion, but nothing happens.

Saigo slowly gets up and stares at the dud. He looks to the Heavens.

SAIGO
Thank you, God. I take back what I said before. You are truly great.

60 EXT. MOTOYAMA MOUNTAIN - MORNING 60

Kuribayashi peers through his binoculars. General Sato and Admiral Ichimaru stand at his side, also monitoring the activity.

He sees GUNBOATS and DESTROYERS approaching the island.

ADMIRAL ICHIMARU
Shall we commence fire?

KURIBAYASHI
It's not yet time.

Hundreds of LANDING CRAFTS hunker on to the beaches, Marines pouring out of their hulls.

ADMIRAL ICHIMARU
The men wish to commence firing.

KURIBAYASHI
Tell them to hold their fire.

ADMIRAL ICHIMARU
(into the radio)
Hold your fire! Hold your fire!

General Sato looks angrily at Kuribayashi.

60 CONTINUED: 60

GENERAL SATO
The Americans will have the beach in no time if there is no resistance.

KURIBAYASHI
Let them land until there is no more room for reinforcements.

He continues to watch with binoculars. Amphibious vehicles converge on the beach like a swarm of bees.

61 EXT. BEACH - MORNING 61

From the viewpoint of one of the beach pillboxes, the massive number of approaching Americans is even more frightening.

A PILLBOX GUNNER looks on nervously, clasping his automatic weapon.

ADMIRAL ICHIMARU(V.O.)
Hold your fire!

A BARRAGE of RIFLE FIRE and SEMI-AUTOMATIC BULLETS fly in from the amassing American army.

The Gunner ducks.

62 EXT. NORTH HILLS - EARLY MORNING 62

Kuribayashi peers through his binoculars again. The beach is flooded with MARINES and VEHICLES. TANKS, trying to make their way, mire in the sand.

KURIBAYASHI
See how they've bunched up there on the beach? There's no room to advance or retreat.

General Sato looks through his binoculars.

KURIBAYASHI
Give the order. Commence firing.

ADMIRAL ICHIMARU
(on the radio)
Begin firing.

63 INT. SURIBACHI CAVES - DAY 63

Men at the windows of their caves UNLEASH FURY, FIRING with MACHINE GUNS onto the beach.

Saigo runs between the interconnected caves, supplying ammo.

EXT. MOTOYAMA MOUNTAIN - DAY

Baron Nishi stands by his men as they load a concealed tank unit.

BARON NISHI
Fire!

The FORCE of the FIRE causes the tank to recoil.

64 EXT. SURIBACHI BEACH - DAY 64

The American marines are FIRED UPON from every direction. MINES BLOW, soldiers fall. Men and machines disintegrate.

A marine runs up the beach and throws a grenade into a pillbox.

The pillbox & bodies of the Japanese gunners fly.

Another marine with a FLAMETHROWER INCINERATES a hidden pillbox and Japanese soldiers run screaming out in flames.

65 INT. SURIBACHI CAVES - DAY 65

Shimizu and Nozaki FIRE DOWN on the marines. The flamethrower is GUNNED DOWN.

66 EXT. MOTOYAMA MOUNTAIN - DAY 66

The chaos of GUNFIRE, SHELLS and HOWLING ROCKETS ECHO through the mountains.

67 INT. COMMAND CENTER - EVENING 67

Kuribayashi fields reports from his officers.

67 CONTINUED: 67

LT. FUJITA
The gun emplacement of the Kitakubo Unit was destroyed. Also, pillbox units on the beach have all been taken or destroyed. However, all other forces are intact and we estimate more than a thousand enemy casualties.

Kuribayashi beams proudly.

KURIBAYASHI
The pillbox destruction was unavoidable. Overall, that is good news. How are the men holding up at Suribachi?

LT. FUJITA
Forces are intact.

KURIBAYASHI
Good. Good. What is the enemy situation?

LT. FUJITA
Enemy strength is estimated at approximately 20,000 men and 80 tanks.

KURIBAYASHI
No. There are far more than that. They still have soldiers waiting to land in their boats.

LT. FUJITA
At present, the enemy bridgehead extends between South Landing and Futatsune Iwo, with its depth greatest in the vicinity of the Western tip of Chidori airfield.

Kuribayashi looks at the map.

KURIBAYASHI
Just as I thought. They are making a two-pronged attack. Suribachi and the Motoyama airfield.

68 INT. SURIBACHI CAVES - NIGHT 68

Saigo, Shimizu, Nozaki and the other men line up in formation. They salute Col. Adachi as he makes his way among the men.

COL. ADACHI
Well done, men. You have proven yourselves today as worthy soldiers. As reward, you have earned Imperial Gifts.

Each man is given one CIGARETTE and one piece of CANDY.

The soldiers bow and gratefully take their booty.

COL. ADACHI
Infinite is the graciousness of our Emperor.

Lighters are passed around, as each soldier savors his cigarette.

69 INT. BARON NISHI'S CAVE - NIGHT 69

Baron Nishi's troop, in contrast, are more relaxed, already seated on the ground with cigarettes.

Baron Nishi lifts a bottle of liquor to toast his men and takes a swig. He still wears his boots with spurs.

70 INT. SURIBACHI CAVES - NIGHT 70

Saigo and Shimizu sit by the cave entrance on night guard duty.

Compared to the chaos of the daytime bombardment, the night air is relatively silent, interrupted only by occasional SPORADIC FIRE.

Saigo starts to drift, his hand slipping off his rifle.

Shimizu nudges him.

SHIMIZU
Hey!

Saigo wakes up, quickly picking up his rifle.

SHIMIZU
You were dozing.

70 CONTINUED: 70

Saigo stands, stretches, and goes to the cave opening. He watches the bright NIGHT FLARES flying into the air.

SAIGO
Reminds me of the summer fireworks at *Obon* season.

Saigo wipes his eyes.

SAIGO
You were from Kanagawa-ken, right?

Shimizu nods.

SAIGO
Before I moved out to Tokyo, I grew up in Yokota. In Akita Prefecture.

Saigo reflects, while Shimizu remains silent.

SAIGO
It doesn't feel like February here. Right now, there would be lots of snow back home. It's right about the time that the village children would be building kamakura. They'd be building snow houses lit with lanterns, offering toasted *mochi* cakes and warm *amazake* to passersby. All along the river, tiny white houses lit with candles. It's really something you ought to see. The pure white snow, the river, the warm glow of the candles...

Saigo reflects on the image in his mind.

SHIMIZU
(softly)
I've heard about it. I would have like to have visited Akita once.

There is a moment of silence.

SAIGO
You're not really *Kempeitai* are you? If you were, you wouldn't be here now.

Shimizu doesn't respond.

70 CONTINUED: (2) 70

SAIGO
If there's something you don't want anyone to know, I'm good at keeping secrets.

Shimizu looks at his watch.

SHIMIZU
Our shift is ended. It's time to go back in.

He gets up and leaves.

71 INT. SURIBACHI CAVES - DAY 71

MORTARS pound the mountain. Ozawa mans a gunner position.

OZAWA
I need more ammo!

Saigo picks up a machine gun tray, when suddenly the CAVE MOUTH EXPLODES with a direct hit.

Ozawa is blasted to the back of the wall, his left arm torn off. He SCREAMS in pain, goes into shock, then slumps over dead.

Saigo rushes to him.

SAIGO
Ozawa!

Captain Tanida emerges.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Saigo, take his place.

SAIGO
The machine gun's blasted.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Use your rifle.

Saigo clumsily tries to undo the safety of his gun. As he does so, his gun points at Tanida.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Watch out! Imbecile!

SAIGO
Sorry, sir.

71 CONTINUED: 71

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Saigo, forget about the rifle. Your shots have always been useless. Go send a report to Col. Adachi that we need another machine gun.

Saigo is inwardly triumphant.

SAIGO
Yes, sir.

Saigo runs through the network of caves. He hears SCREAMS as men are hit by direct SHOTS. SMOKE and DUST fill the caves.

72 EXT. NORTH HILLS - DAY 72

Kuribayashi watches again with binoculars.

The EXPLOSIONS are spectacular. Relentless.

LT. FUJITA
Sir, Suirbachi is taking a pounding. Col. Adachi is asking for reinforcements.

KURIBAYASHI
We cannot send reinforcements. Tell him to hold out.

73 INT. SURIBACHI BASE CAVE - DAY 73

Shimizu and Nozaki man a machine gun position. The HOWLING of BLASTS and SHELLS ECHOES throughout.

Shimizu's body reverberates as he controls the machine gun.

74 EXT. SURIBACHI CAVES - DAY 74

The American Marines rush towards the mountain. One Marine heads straight for Shimizu's hole, with a live grenade in his hand.

NOZAKI
Shoot him.

Shimizu aims the gun at him, but it's jammed. He hits the machine.

74 CONTINUED: 74

NOZAKI
What's the matter?

SHIMIZU
It's jammed!

The American keeps rushing. Shimizu fumbles for his pistol, but in his nervousness, his hand shakes. He drops the pistol.

Just as the American is about to throw the live grenade, he is shot down. The GRENADE EXPLODES in his hand.

Nozaki holds the smoldering pistol.

75 INT. ADACHI'S CAVE - DAY 75

Saigo arrives at Adachi's cave. Col. Adachi looks tired and beat. He nervously sucks on a cigarette as he speaks into a radio transmitter.

Saigo waits for him to finish.

COL. ADACHI
General, we are losing Suribachi. It's all lost. Request permission to lead a suicide mission at 2100 hours.

76 INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY 76

Kuribayashi hears Adachi's haggard voice.

KURIBAYASHI
No. No suicide missions. You and your men must try to hold out. If all fails, join forces in the North caves.

COL. ADACHI (V.O.)
But, sir. I have failed to hold Suribachi. Permit me to die with honor with my men.

KURIBAYASHI
No, Colonel, this is an order --

The LINE IS CUT and it turns to STATIC.

KURIBAYASHI
Adachi...Hello?

77 INT. ADACHI'S CAVES - DAY 77

There is just STATIC on the WIRE. Col. Adachi finally turns to Saigo, his eyes bloodshot.

SAIGO
Sir, Captain Tanida requests to have a machine gun team sent to his area.

COL. ADACHI
It's lost. It's all lost.

SAIGO
Sir?

COL. ADACHI
Suicide. It's the only thing left. Your men should commit suicide.

Adachi scribbles a NOTE.

SAIGO
But the General--

ADACHI
Here, take this to your commander.

Saigo takes the note. He looks back at Adachi who goes back to sucking his cigarette and staring at the cave wall.

Saigo retreats through the caves with the note.

78 INT. SURIBACHI CAVES - EVENING 78

Captain Tanida stares at the note. It reads *"Jiketsu"* (mass suicide).

The men are solemnly gathered around, knowing what is to come.

SAIGO
Captain, I heard General Kuribayashi order Col. Adachi to escape --

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Quiet! Escape is the coward's way. Sit down!

78 CONTINUED: 78

Saigo complies and sits down in the back.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Men, we must remember that we are the Emperor's soldiers. We must now die illustriously and find our place at Yasukuni Shrine. This is our destiny.

One of the soldiers sobs.

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Tennoheika Banzai!

MEN
Banzai! Banzai! Banzai!

CAPTAIN TANIDA
Pull your grenades men.

There is silence. Finally, one of the soldiers shouts.

SUICIDE SOLDIER
Tennoheika Banzai!

He pulls the pin off his grenade, holds it to his chest. This starts a chain reaction.

Saigo watches in horror as Nozaki pulls his GRENADE and EXPLODES.

Saigo falls back away from the rest of the men.

Captain Tanida takes his PISTOL out and SHOOTS himself in the head, falling over dead bodies.

Shimizu has his hand on his grenade, but it shakes. He sits there frozen.

Saigo retreats backward, heading for an outlet. Then he makes a run for it.

Shimizu sees this, pulls out his pistol and follows after him.

SHIMIZU
Stop!

Saigo turns around. Shimizu has his pistol pointed at him.

SHIMIZU
You should die like an honorable soldier!

78 CONTINUED: (2) 78

SAIGO
Look, Shimizu, we can still join the troops in the Northern caves.

SHIMIZU
Our orders are to stay here until death.

SAIGO
I heard General Kuribayashi himself give orders to escape.

Shimizu hesitates.

SAIGO
I heard it on the wire.

Shimizu still seems undecided.

SAIGO
Would we better serve the Emperor as dead men or if we continued fighting?

Shimizu finally puts his gun down.

They both run off through the --

79 NETWORK OF CAVES 79

- an intricate system of tunnels below Suribachi.

SHIMIZU
Where does this go?

SAIGO
Underground. It'll take us closer to Motoyama.

Saigo and Shimizu make their way through the tunnels when they spot two other soldiers, PVTS. ONO and HASHIMOTO.

ONO
Do you have orders to move back?

Shimizu hesitates.

HASHIMOTO
Where's the rest of your men?

SAIGO
All dead.

79 CONTINUED: 79

ONO
It's the same with us.

The tunnel narrows. Up above, they can hear the FOOTSTEPS of Marines running.

HASHIMOTO
There's an outlet somewhere near here.

SAIGO
Shhhh.

MARINE 1 (O.S)
(in English)
I can hear Japs below us.

MARINE 2 (O.S.)
Hey guys, there's a hole here.

LIGHT pours through the tunnel. The men freeze. A BLAST OF FIRE from a tunnel hole enters the cave. Hashimoto, closest to the outlet, is set aflame.

He SCREAMS in agony.

ONO
Hashimoto!

The flame consumes him. He rolls on the ground, but there is no putting the fire out.

A GRENADE is tossed from above. Saigo pulls Ono back with him and the men turn and run back the way they came as the EXPLOSION rocks the narrow cave walls. Saigo looks back at the blocked passage way.

ONO
Hashimoto!

80 INT. SURIBACHI TUNNELS - NIGHT 80

Ono looks disheartened as the men trudge through the tunnels, back the way they came.

SAIGO
We'll have to find another way.
We'll go back to Suribachi.

They continue to make their way through the tunnels when they hear Japanese SOLDIERS YELLING.

80 CONTINUED: 80

They turn a bend and see a group of soldiers, dragging a BATTERED AMERICAN MARINE/KID.

SOLDIER #1
We got one!

SOLDIER #2
Pulled him out of the ceiling!

Soldier #1 yells at the Kid.

SOLDIER #1
So you thought you could blow us up, or burn us alive like the rest, did you?

The Kid doesn't understand a word.

Ono joins the other soldiers, pulls him up by the scruff.

ONO
You damn Americans killed Hashimoto!

He punches the Kid and knocks him to the floor. Then he starts kicking him.

Other members of the garrison join in on the kicking.

The Kid trembles with fear.

KID
Please!

Soldier #1 takes out his bayonet and attaches it to his rifle. Ono follows his example. They close in on him and spear him.

Shimizu watches frozen. Saigo turns away, unable to watch.

Blood spurts on the walls as the Kid SCREAMS.

ONO
Dirty American!

81 INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT 81

Kuribayashi paces back and forth.

KURIBAYASHI
Have we heard anything more from the Suribachi sector?

81 CONTINUED: 81

LT. FUJITA
No, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
Send out a messenger.

LT. FUJITA
Yes, sir.

82 INT. SURIBACHI TUNNELS - NIGHT 82

Soldier #1 leads Saigo and the rest of the men.

SOLDIER #1
Lieutenant Oiso has ordered all survivors to rendezvous at the East Main cave.

83 INT. EAST CAVE - NIGHT 83

Saigo, Shimizu, Ono and the other soldiers gather along with a large group of soldiers.

A haggard looking LT. COL. OISO briefs them.

LT. COL. OISO
We will make a run for the Motoyama mountains. There is no cover for two kilometers. It's every man for himself.

He looks at the men.

LT. COL. OISO
See you on the other side. If not on this earth, in the next world.

84 EXT. SURIBACHI MOUNTAIN - NIGHT 84

Saigo and Shimizu stand waiting among the troops, ready to make their mad dash.

SAIGO
(whispering)
Don't run up with the herd. That's where the enemy will aim their guns. Fall back behind and stay low.

SHIMIZU
That's cowardice!

84 CONTINUED: 84

SAIGO
Call it what you will, but there's no use for a dead soldier.

Shimizu falls back slightly.

Lt. Col Oiso lets out a YELL, leading the desperate charge.

The troops follow, rushing out in an unorganized stampede.

The night sky explodes with FLARES and ARTILLERY SHOTS.

Lt. Col Oiso's short-lived charge ends as he falls to the ground. Others meet a similar fate.

Saigo and Shimizu straggle from behind.

SAIGO
Keep down! Keep down!

Men continue to fall before them in a virtual bloodbath.

A BARRAGE OF BULLETS hits the ground before them.

SAIGO
Get down!

Saigo and Shimizu fall to the ground.

The slaughter continues.

Finally, the rapid FIRE slows as the number of men left standing diminishes.

SAIGO
Crawl forward.

Shimizu and Saigo do a slow crawl along the ground.

SAIGO
Wait until the flares go out.

The flares dissipate to black.

SAIGO
Now!

They rush forward. A new flare goes up.

SAIGO
Get down!

84 CONTINUED: (2) 84

They lie amongst dead Japanese soldier bodies.

Another STRAFE OF BULLETS hits the ground and Shimizu quickly pulls a dead soldier's body over him for protection.

When the flare dies out, they continue on.

Other Japanese soldiers follow their example. Those whose movements are caught in the light of the flares are instantly shot.

85 EXT. MOTOYAMA MOUNTAIN - MORNING 85

Shimizu and Saigo scramble up a mountain. They are covered with black, sooty sand, weary and exhausted.

SHIMIZU
Look!

Saigo turns around to see the AMERICAN FLAG flying on top of Mt. Suribachi.

86 INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY 86

Kuribayashi paces.

KURIBAYASHI
Have we heard back from the messenger to General Adachi?

LT. FUJITA
No, sir. He never came back.

Kuribayashi looks perturbed.

KURIBAYASHI
I'll go out there myself.

LT. FUJITA
But, sir...

He starts to head out. Lt. Fujita runs after him.

LT. FUJITA
General, Motoyama has a transmitter as well. Perhaps they have been able to receive a message. We should try there first.

87 INT. MOTOYAMA CAVES - DAY 87

Shimizu and Saigo come to the mouth of a cave. They hear the CLICK of a GUN.

SAIGO
The password.

SHIMIZU
Nogi.

GUARD (O.S.)
Togo.

The GUARD emerges and they are led into the cave.

88 INT. ITO'S CAVE - DAY 88

Lt. Ito stares out one of the gun ports of the caves towards the flag on Suribachi with anguish.

GUARD
Sir, these men escaped from Mt. Suribachi.

Lt. Ito looks at them harshly.

LT. ITO
What?

The men stand at attention.

SHIMIZU
Shimizu, Yoichi reporting for duty, sir.

SAIGO
Saigo, Katsuhiro.

LT. ITO
You escaped from Mt. Suribachi?

SHIMIZU
Yes, sir.

LT. ITO
How dare you!

He pulls out his sword. All the men take a step back away from him.

88 CONTINUED: 88

LT. ITO
It was your duty to stay in your positions until death! You should have died with your fellow troop members! You're both a disgrace. Get on your knees!

SAIGO
But, sir...

He advances with his sword.

LT. ITO
I said get on your knees!

Trembling, Shimizu and Saigo fall to their knees.

Lt. Ito lifts his sword. Just as he does, Kuribayashi enters with Lt. Fujita.

KURIBAYASHI
Lieutenant Ito!

Lt. Ito turns around, puts his sword down and salutes them.

KURIBAYASHI
What are you doing?

LT. ITO
These men ran from Mt. Suribachi.

KURIBAYASHI
Lt. Ito, I gave the order that all survivors make their way to the North caves. I can't have you decapitating my soldiers.

LT. ITO
I'm very sorry, sir. It's just...

He looks towards Suribachi with the flag waving and sits down on the ground.

LT. ITO
Suribachi has fallen.

He puts his head into his hands.

Saigo and Shimizu, grateful that their lives have been spared, retreat to the back of the cave.

Kuribayashi looks out towards Suribachi and sees the flag atop the mountain. He looks crestfallen.

88 CONTINUED: (2) 88

A barrage of BOMBS and SHELLING starts.

KURIBAYASHI
Now that Suribachi has been taken, the enemy will maneuver all forces onto the hillside.

Kuribayashi turns to Lt. Ito, puts a hand on his shoulder.

KURIBAYASHI
Fight for your fallen brethren.

89 INT. MOTOYAMA CAVES - NIGHT 89

Shimizu and Saigo, wiped from their ordeals, SNORE like two chainsaws.

They are kicked awake by one of ITO'S SOLDIERs.

ITO'S SOLDIER
Get up!

Shimizu and Saigo slowly get up.

ITO'S SOLDIER
Major General Sato is leading a general attack. Our men are to join him.

SAIGO
But General Kuribayashi's orders are to remain in the caves.

ITO'S SOLDIER
Lieutenant Ito says Kuribayashi is a weak American sympathizer.

90 INT. MOTOYAMA CAVES - NIGHT 90

Lt. Ito gathers his force of about 25 soldiers together.

LT. ITO
We will take back Mt. Suribachi! Let us march!

The soldiers follow behind him as he leads the way out of the caves.

91 EXT. NAVY CEMETERY - NIGHT 91

Lt. Ito's men gather near the cemetery between airfields No. 2 and No. 3.

They are behind a gathering of a large group of men, hopelessly disorganized, milling around in the darkness.

Lt. Ito approaches one of them.

LT. ITO
Where is Major General Sato?

SOLDIER
We don't know.

LT. ITO
Who's in charge here?

The Soldier looks around hopelessly.

SOLDIER
I'm not sure.

Lt. Ito returns to his men.

LT. ITO
Stay here until I determine the plan of action.

Suddenly an undisciplined yell of *"Banzai!"* rings out, starting a chain reaction and the men in front of them stampede forward.

SAIGO
(muttering)
We're dead.

Lt. Ito looks surprised by the movement.

Almost instantaneously the sky lights up with star-shell FLARES, exposing the attackers. MORTAR ROUNDS throw up geysers of earth and ash.

MACHINE GUNS pellet the men and they drop like flies.

Lt. Ito, Saigo, Shimizu, and the rest of his regiment are pinned down, crouched behind rocks.

BULLETS WHIZ in every direction.

A man next to Shimizu attempts to get up but is immediately shot in the head, falling down next to him.

91 CONTINUED: 91

LT. ITO
Pull back! We'll get reinforcements.

The men retreat and head back for the caves near Nidan Iwa, the area the Americans have dubbed Hill 382.

92 EXT. BARON NISHI'S CAVE - NIGHT 92

Lt. Ito leads his team to the mouth of the cave.

NISHI'S GUARD (O.S.)
Nogi.

LT. ITO
Togo. It's Lt. Ito.

NISHI'S GUARD lets him pass through.

LT. ITO
Why didn't your regiment join the attack? You're not rats. Come out of your caves and fight! Where is your commander?

Baron Nishi appears.

BARON NISHI
There is to be no attack.

LT. ITO
What? General Sato sent the order.

BARON NISHI
Kuribayashi countermanded Sato's order. There is to be no attack.

LT. ITO
We will take back Suribachi! With or without Kuribayashi. There are already troops on the attack. Get your men in order!

This riles Baron Nishi.

BARON NISHI
Lieutenant, may I remind you of your rank. Your disrespect of your senior officers puts your men at needless risk and compromises the island's general defense strategy.

92 CONTINUED: 92

BARON NISHI (cont'd)
I suggest either you go back to your cave, or hand over your men.

Lt. Ito storms out of the cave, cursing Nishi.

LT. ITO
(to his men)
We'll do it ourselves.

Shimizu turns to Saigo.

SHIMIZU
(whispering)
This is against rules. It's mutiny to counter a senior officer.

SAIGO
Never trust a captain that tries to cut your head off.

93 EXT. NAVY CEMETERY - NIGHT 93

SMOKE rises from the field -- a surreal sea of dead Japanese soldiers on a dark battlefield.

The men stare at the scene in shock.

Lt. Ito sits down crestfallen.

Finally, he gets up, faltering a bit.

LT. ITO
I won't go back. I've had enough of cave fighting. You men are now under Lieutenant Colonel Nishi's command.

Lt. Ito picks up an EXPLOSIVE and straps it to his back.

LT. ITO
I won't die before I take out at least one of their machines. Even if I have to throw myself under an enemy tank.

The men look at each other in awe. Lt. Ito solemnly turns and leaves the men.

Lt. Ito staggers forth into the darkness.

94 INT. KITANO POINT COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT 94

Kuribayashi takes counsel with his staff. Lt. Fujita walks in holding a piece of paper.

KURIBAYASHI
What is the status?

LT. FUJITA
A thousand men were lost in a night time skirmish along Chidori Airfield 1.

KURIBAYASHI
Wasn't my order not to lead a general attack conveyed?

LT. FUJITA
It seems the orders countermanding General Sato were not conveyed to all sectors.

Kuribayashi pounds the table.

KURIBAYASHI
Damn that General Sato!

Kuribayashi paces.

KURIBAYASHI
And the American advancement?

LT. FUJITA
A battalion is headed North as expected and meeting light resistance along Nishi ridge.

Kuribayashi looks at a map. He outlines the Marine movement.

KURIBAYASHI
Good, then they are falling into our trap. Once they cross Nishi ridge, they will be surrounded on three sides.

Kuribayashi looks at Fujita.

KURIBAYASHI
Have we received a response yet from Tokyo for reinforcements and supplies?

94 CONTINUED: 94

LT. FUJITA
This came in sir.

He passes the piece of paper to Kuribayashi. Kuribayashi reads it gravely.

KURIBAYASHI
(reading)
'I regret that we are unable to send reinforcements to Iwo at this time. However, in view of the overall requirements, I earnestly hope you will maintain calm and fight staunchly by all means.'

95 EXT. GULLY - MORNING 95

Lt. Ito, with the bomb still strapped to his back, finds FIVE DEAD BODIES along what looks like a logical route of advancement.

He settles himself among the dead bodies, FLIES BUZZING around him.

He stares at the sky above in silence, waiting for the tanks to come.

96 EXT. BARON NISHI'S CAVE - MORNING 96

GUNFIRE and TANK BLASTING ECHO through the mountains.

Saigo and Shimizu are assigned the strenuous duty of loading a SPIGOT MORTAR. Loading and BLASTING. The SHELL makes a WHIRRING noise as it flies through the air.

Three American tanks are taken out as they head along the 3rd Motoyama airfield.

Now in the daylight hours, the Americans take a beating. Trying to advance along the airstrip, they are mercilessly slaughtered.

One GRENADE-BEARING MARINE bravely rushes out, throwing a grenade into a fortified pillbox in the hillside. He is immediately SHOT down.

97 INSIDE THE CAVE 97

LT. OKUBO, Nishi's aide, notices movement directly below them.

97 CONTINUED: 97

OKUBO
Look!

SAM, a lone American flamethrower, has somehow made it through the front lines. He is about to spray a cave, when Okubo SHOOTS the marine and he falls.

It is apparent he is still alive as he MOANS.

BARON NISHI
Bring him in.

98 BARON NISHI'S CAVE - LATER 98

Okubo and Shimizu drag Sam in. He's about Shimizu's age, not more than 17 or 18.

OKUBO
Shall I finish him off?

BARON NISHI
No, have Medic Endo treat him.

They look at him surprised. MEDIC ENDO turns from bandaging a minor wound on another soldier.

OKUBO
But sir...

BARON NISHI
You would expect the same if it were the other way around, wouldn't you?

Medic Endo approaches them.

MEDIC ENDO
We're short on morphine.

SHIMIZU
Sir, the Americans would not treat a wounded Japanese soldier. They would run him over with their tank treads.

BARON NISHI
What do you know of Americans? Have you ever met an American, young boy?

SHIMIZU
No, sir.

98 CONTINUED: 98

BARON NISHI
I have.
(to Medic Endo)
Give it to him.

The three begrudgingly comply and help Sam over to the back. The medic administers to his wounds.

99 EXT. GULLY - DAY 99

Lt. Ito still lies patiently among the bodies waiting for a tank to arrive.

100 INT. BARON NISHI'S CAVE - NIGHT 100

Baron Nishi takes a swig from a sake bottle. Sam lies on a bedroll, a bandage wrapped around his chest.

BARON NISHI
How is the prisoner doing?

MEDIC ENDO
He is awake.

BARON NISHI
I will question the prisoner for information.

Okubo looks at him suspiciously.

Baron Nishi approaches Sam and converses with him in English.

BARON NISHI
(in English)
Where are you from, soldier?

SAM
(weakly)
Able Company --

BARON NISHI
No, I mean what is your home town?

Tense, Sam doesn't answer.

BARON NISHI
I lived in California for a while. Do you know of Mary Pickford? Or Douglas Fairbanks?

100 CONTINUED: 100

SAM
You mean the-movie stars? Why sure, everybody knows them.

BARON NISHI
I took my picture with them. It was in the papers.

Sam loosens up a bit.

SAM
No kidding. You somebody famous?

BARON NISHI
I was in the Los Angeles Olympics.

Sam's eyes widen.

SAM
Is that the God's honest truth?

Baron Nishi beams. He pulls out a PICTURE.

BARON NISHI
That's a picture of me and my horse jumping.

Sam weakly tries to get up to see it.

SAM
No kidding.
(a beat)
Oklahoma. That's where I'm from.

Baron Nishi holds out his hand.

BARON NISHI
Takeichi.

SAM
Sam.

They shake.

101 EXT. GULLY - NIGHT 101

Lt. Ito is still among the bodies. Finally he gets up.

LT. ITO
Where are you American tanks?
Come and get me!

Silence.

102 EXT. BEACH - MORNING 102

An American soldier turns on a MILITARY RADIO.

AMERICAN SOLDIER
(in English)
Turn it up, Charlie.

The VOLUME is blasted LOUDLY. BIG BAND MUSIC.

103 INT. BARON NISHI'S CAVE - MORNING 103

Saigo and the others pass around a cigarette, sharing puffs in the momentary calm.

Shimizu holds a piece of a cracked mirror, looks at himself. He shaves his face smooth with a dry razor.

Baron Nishi can hear the strains of the RADIO MUSIC. He goes over to Sam, who looks paler than the previous day.

BARON NISHI
(in English)
What is this music?

Sam's eyes flutter, half conscious.

SAM
Swing music.

BARON NISHI
Swing music? Is it what they play in the clubs now?

Listening to the MUSIC, Baron Nishi seems to be in another place and time. He looks to Sam, but there is no response.

Baron Nishi looks to Medic Endo.

MEDIC ENDO
He's lost a lot of blood.

104 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - MORNING 104

Kuribayashi also hears the FAINT MUSIC through the RADIO TRANSMISSION.

In the dark cave, Kuribayashi doodles a picture of a dinner party.

105 FLASHBACK - INT. FORT BLISS (TEXAS) - DANCE HALL - NIGHT - (1929) 105

An elaborate dinner party for the officers. MUSIC WAFTS through the hall. American officers and their wives mingle, dressed in formal attire. Kuribayashi is seated at a dinner table, looking awkward.

KURIBAYASHI (V.O.)
Taro, on Friday, there was a dinner party for the officers and their wives. Americans have a strange custom where men have to stop eating and stand every time a woman comes in. It makes no sense to me.

SOUND CROSSOVER TO:

KURIBAYASHI

is about to take a bite of his meal, when one of the OFFICERS' WIVES walks to the table and all the men stand. Kuribayashi looks at them mid-bite, then puts his fork down and stands with them.

They sit back down, but another woman enters and the men stand once again. Kuribayashi reluctantly stands with them.

After they are all seated, a conversation carries over to Kuribayashi.

OFFICER'S WIFE
(in English)
Let's ask Captain Kuri.

All turn to Kuribayashi. He is oblivious at first.

OFFICER'S WIFE
You don't mind me calling you Kuri, do you, Captain?

Kuribayashi realizes she is speaking to him and looks up questioningly.

OFFICER'S WIFE
How would you feel if America and Japan were to enter war?

KURIBAYASHI
I believe they would make splendid allies.

105 CONTINUED: 105

AMERICAN OFFICER
No, she means against each other.

The company is poised on Kuribayashi's every word.

KURIBAYASHI
The United States is the last country in the world Japan should fight, but if this were to happen, I would serve my duty to my country.

OFFICER'S WIFE
Do you mean if Bertie here was on the opposite side, you would shoot him?

Kuribayashi hesitates.

KURIBAYASHI
I would have to follow my convictions.

AMERICAN OFFICER
Do you mean you would have to follow your convictions? Or your country's convictions.

Kuribayashi hesitates again.

KURIBAYASHI
Are they not the same?

AMERICAN OFFICER
Spoken like a true soldier.

OFFICER'S WIFE
Oh that's awful. Bertie, that means you're dead.

There is nervous laughter.

END OF FLASHBACK.

106 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - MORNING 106

Kuribayashi, still sketching the dinner party, puts his pen down.

107 EXT. GULLY - MORNING 107

Lt. Ito has once more settled himself among the dead bodies.

He stares up into the sky. The distant strains of the RADIO MUSIC can still be heard.

108 INT. BARON NISHI'S CAVE - MORNING 108

Baron Nishi notices Sam's pale complexion. Baron Nishi comes to him.

BARON NISHI
(in English)
Hey.

He touches him gently and realizes he is dead. Baron Nishi looks discouraged.

He covers the boy's body with a blanket. As he does so, he notices a PIECE OF PAPER in the soldier's shirt pocket. He pulls it out.

Okubo notices Baron Nishi pull out the paper.

OKUBO
Is there any enemy plan information?

BARON NISHI
No, it's just a letter.

He reads through it.

OKUBO
What does it say?

Saigo, Shimizu, and other soldiers in the cave stop to listen to what the letter says.

BARON NISHI
It's from his mother.
(translating)
'I have mailed you a couple of books to read. I hope you like them. Yesterday, the dogs dug a hole under the fence. They ran all the way down the neighborhood and terrorized the Harrisons' roosters before we found them.'

108 CONTINUED: 108

Baron Nishi smiles at this.

BARON NISHI
'Don't worry about us. Just take care of yourself and come back safely. Remember what I said to you -- always do what's right because it is right. I pray for a speedy end to the war and your safe return.'

The soldiers are silent.

Suddenly, a BARRAGE of SHELLING and GUNFIRE ERUPTS.

The men, quickly go to their posts.

They FIRE at the advancing Americans with MACHINE GUNS and RIFLES.

Baron Nishi directs his men at the front.

109 EXT. OUTSIDE CAVE - LATER 109

Saigo and Shimizu carry a mortar from the cave to reload their spigot, when a BOMB BLAST hits their machine, putting it out of commission.

Another large BLAST hits the cave.

Baron Nishi reels back, his face covered in blood.

SAIGO
Medic Endo!

Medic Endo attends to Nishi. He opens his kit. It's empty, except for a roll of bandage.

MEDIC ENDO
I'm sorry, sir. There's no more medicine.

The medic covers Baron Nishi's eyes with a strip of bandage.

BARON NISHI
It's all right. I'm useless anyway. Go help the others.

Medic Endo complies, attending to other injured soldiers.

110 EXT. GULLY - EVENING 110

Lt. Ito stares into the sky. He has had two days to contemplate life beyond the war.

A lone SEA BIRD flies overhead, small and fragile, making its way through the remnant smoke of bombardments, up into the darkening blue sky.

A change comes over Ito and he starts to CRY.

At last, he gets up. He unstraps the bomb from his back, and leaves it.

He makes his way to a naturally formed cave and sits there on the ground CRYING.

He wants to live.

111 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - NIGHT 111

Kuribayashi looks at his strategic map of Iwo Jima. He crosses out Japanese positions that have been quashed by the Americans.

LT. FUJITA
Sir, supply planes have been spotted.

KURIBAYASHI
Are they ours?

LT. FUJITA
Yes, sir.

Kuribayashi brightens.

KURIBAYASHI
At last.

112 EXT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - NIGHT 112

Kuribayashi watches off in the distance. The DRONE of JAPANESE PLANES can be heard.

He smiles as he sees the cargo planes approach, bearing the unmistakable emblem of the red sun. His smile turns to dismay when one by one the planes are shot down.

113 EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - NIGHT 113

GUNNERS on ships, quickly home in on the lumbering Japanese planes and let out an ALL-OUT ASSAULT, sending the supply planes careening into the Pacific in horrific fireballs.

Only two supply planes make it through.

114 EXT. NEAR FRONT LINE - NIGHT 114

The two planes begin dropping their precious CARGO. A single string of a dozen PARACHUTES.

Under the light of thousands of flares, the parachutes are as clear as day.

115 EXT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE 115

Kuribayashi holds up his binoculars

KURIBAYASHI
They're off mark! Off mark! Too close to the line.

Kuribayashi anguishes as he watches the life-saving supplies drop into unreachable zones.

116 EXT. NEAR FRONT LINE 116

Soldiers spot the supplies parachuting. At first, they CHEER loudly.

But as they land, the soldiers soon realize they are irretrievable.

A few brave souls make a mad dash out towards the supplies, but are easy targets and are immediately GUNNED DOWN.

117 INT. BARON NISHI'S CAVE - NIGHT 117

Baron Nishi feels around for his bottle of sake. It's empty. He opens his canteen, shakes it, turns it over. It's also empty.

BARON NISHI
Okubo, come here.

117 CONTINUED: 117

Okubo obeys.

BARON NISHI
How are we on ammunition?

OKUBO
Not good, sir. Our mortars have been taken out and we're out of machine gun ammo. We just have our rifles.

BARON NISHI
Okubo, listen. You're now in charge of the men.

OKUBO
Sir?

BARON NISHI
We can no longer hold this area. You must guide the rest of the men up to Kitano Point. They should hold out there as long as possible. Take whatever food and ammo we have left.

OKUBO
But, what about you, Colonel?

Baron Nishi chuckles.

BARON NISHI
I'm tired of sharing this cave with all of you. I'm a one man show from here on.

OKUBO
But, sir..

BARON NISHI
Okubo, you're trying my patience. Your first order of business should be to find some water.

OKUBO
Yes, sir.

Okubo bows in front of him, even though Baron Nishi can't see him.

OKUBO
Sir, it has been a great honor to serve under you.

118 BARON NISHI'S CAVE - LATER 118

Saigo and the men are packed up and ready to leave the cave.

They line up in formation.

Okubo stands next to the bandaged Baron Nishi

OKUBO
Bow!

The men all bow to Baron Nishi, even though he can't see them.

BARON NISHI
Do your best, men. Fight bravely for our Emperor and homeland, but above all else, do what's right because it's right.

MEN
Yes, sir.

Okubo turns to Baron Nishi.

OKUBO
I will ask General Kuribayashi to send a doctor and supplies to come to your assistance.

BARON NISHI
Thank you, Okubo.

Okubo leads Baron Nishi to a stool to sit down on, and leaves a rifle in his hand.

Okubo and the men slowly exit the cave, looking at Nishi as they leave.

INTERCUT MEN/BARON NISHI

The men make their way out of the cave.

Baron Nishi pulls out a pistol and puts it to his head. The sound of SWING MUSIC wafts in the air, whether in his head or not, it is unclear.

As the men make their way around the mountain, they hear a SINGLE GUNSHOT.

Okubo pauses and the other men look at each other. Okubo continues on without a word.

119 EXT. WELL - NIGHT 119

The soldiers hunker down along a sand bank, close to a CONSTRUCTED WELL. They hold out their rifles in ready position.

Saigo lies in the sand next to Shimizu.

Okubo motions for two of the soldiers to move out. They quickly move out towards the well, holding two metal canisters each.

SAIGO
They've got to make it.

NIGHT FLARES light up the sky.

The soldiers make it to the well without incident. They quietly fill their containers with the precious water.

Saigo licks his lips.

Back at the sand bank, the soldiers continue to look out for signs of the enemy, but all seems peaceful.

Successful, they begin hauling the containers, when a bright WHITE LIGHT spots them and freezes on them.

They try to duck down, but its difficult with the containers.

Suddenly, the area explodes with RAPID FIRE.

The two soldiers are gunned down.

The men in the sand banks return fire, but they are outgunned.

The METAL CANISTERS are RIDDLED with BULLETS and the precious water seeps into the ground.

SAIGO
Damn!

The soldiers watch as the water continues to seep. Dismay in their eyes.

OKUBO
Get Down! Move back! Move back!

The men turn back.

120 INT. CAVE - NIGHT 120

Shimizu and Saigo sit together. They both look frustrated.

SAIGO
Damn it, I've had it! I'm going to surrender.

He looks angrily at Shimizu.

SAIGO
Go ahead and arrest me. I don't care anymore. That's what you were put here for, isn't it? To report treasonous thoughts?

SHIMIZU
No, you're wrong.

A beat.

SHIMIZU
I was put here because I was dismissed from the *Kempeitai*.

Saigo looks at him, surprised.

SAIGO
Dismissed?

SHIMIZU
That's right. For disobeying a senior officer.

121 FLASHBACK - EXT. TOKYO STREETS - EVENING 121

Shimizu and Captain Iwasaki walk along the streets of Tokyo.

SHIMIZU (V.O.)
I had only been in service for 5 days.

Captain Iwasaki walks with Shimizu.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
You must always be firm, Shimizu. Any hesitation and people will know that they can't respect you.

121 CONTINUED: 121

SHIMIZU
Yes, sir.

They walk through the quiet village, not a soul on the street, only the sound of the imperial FLAG FLAPPING in the WIND in front of houses. All the houses, except one.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
That house does not have the flag displayed. Go sort it out, Shimizu.

SHIMIZU
Yes, sir.

Shimizu runs up to the house and bangs on the door.

A MOTHER opens the door. Her two CHILDREN cling to her and peer out at him. An AKITA behind a fence BARKS at him.

SHIMIZU
(sternly)
You do not have the imperial flag properly displayed, ma'am.

MOTHER
Oh, I'm sorry. My husband has gone to war, and I couldn't put it up myself.

SHIMIZU
It is unpatriotic not to have the flag displayed.

MOTHER
If you help me, I'll put it up now.

Shimizu waits patiently as she brings out the flag.

The dog runs to the fence and barks ferociously at Captain Iwasaki.

The Mother appears with the flag for Shimizu. He attaches the flag to a pole extending near the roof of the house.

The AKITA continues BARKING at Iwasaki.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
Get that dog to shut up.

The DOG continues to BARK incessantly.

121 CONTINUED: (2) 121

SHIMIZU
What's that, sir?

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
That dog is a nuisance. It's disruptive of army communications.

MOTHER
I'm very sorry, sir. Pochi! Be quiet! Pochi!

She tries to drag the DOG away. It continues to BARK and GROWL at Captain Iwasaki.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
Shimizu, dispose of the dog immediately. We can't have a dog interfering with important military commands.

Shimizu pauses.

SHIMIZU
Yes, sir. Ma'am bring the dog, please.

The Mother looks horrified.

MOTHER
It's only a dog. It won't happen again.

The children look at Shimizu, fearfully. The BOY runs to his dog and puts his arms around it.

SHIMIZU
Take it out back. Keep the children inside.

Captain Iwasaki looks bored. The Mother complies.

122 EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT 122

The Mother brings the Akita out back on a leash. Shimizu ties the leash to a fence.

Shimizu aims his gun at the dog. Cocks the trigger. Aims.

The dog looks at him, wagging it's tail.

At the last moment, Shimizu SHOOTS in the air.

122 CONTINUED: 122

Shimizu looks at the Mother.

SHIMIZU
Take the dog into the house and keep him quiet. Don't let him out again.

MOTHER
Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

She pulls the dog inside.

123 EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - NIGHT 123

Shimizu emerges from the back.

SHIMIZU
It's taken care of, sir.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
Good.

They start to leave, when a BARK is heard from inside the house.

Shimizu's face falters. Captain Iwasaki looks back at him.

Angrily, Iwasaki marches back to the door. He bursts in without knocking.

Momentarily, a SHOT is heard along with a sharp WHIMPER.

A commotion is heard inside, with the MOTHER SHOUTING along with CHILDREN CRYING.

Shimizu closes his eyes.

Captain Iwasakai emerges from the house and storms out towards Shimizu.

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
Are you trying to make a fool out of me?

SHIMIZU
No, sir.

Captain Iwasaki strikes Shimizu with a force that sends him to the ground.

123 CONTINUED: 123

CAPTAIN IWASAKI
If you can't even shoot a dog, you'll never be able to handle the Reds.

END OF FLASHBACK.

124 INT. CAVE - NIGHT 124

Saigo looks at Shimizu.

SHIMIZU
I was dismissed for insubordination and sent here.

SAIGO
Don't look so glum, Shimizu. At least now only the enemy hates you.

Saigo and Shimizu chuckle. Then Shimizu becomes quiet again.

SHIMIZU
It was just an innocent thing.

125 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - NIGHT 125

Kuribayashi paces restlessly.

KURIBAYASHI
Why am I not getting any reports? Have we heard from Admiral Ichimaru or General Sato?

LT. FUJITA
No, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
What about the 26th Tank Regiment or the 145th?

Lt. Fujita is silent.

KURIBAYASHI
Send out messengers.

LT. FUJITA
We have, sir. None of them have come back.

125 CONTINUED: 125

KURIBAYASHI
(angrily)
We need to find any remaining troops and have them put up a defense position near the commanding post. How can I command a garrison that I can't see or talk to?

LT. FUJITA
Yes, sir.

126 EXT. MOTOYAMA MOUNTAINS - NIGHT 126

The troop trudges through the scarred mountains, silent and sedate.

They come into a secluded valley with shelled out pillboxes and caves littered with bodies of DEAD JAPANESE soldiers, some charred beyond recognition.

SMOKE still rises from the flamethrower's trail.

OKUBO
Check the caves for food.

The soldiers comply and a happy SHOUT from one of them indicates success.

The soldier brings out a canister and the men congregate around him, grabbing uncooked rice from the canister with their hands and gulping them down hungrily.

Some of the rice falls to the floor and the men grovel for it.

Saigo and Shimizu grovel with the others on the ground.

Saigo chokes on the rice.

SHIMIZU
Are you all right?

Shimizu and Saigo fall back. Saigo sits on the ground, COUGHING.

SAIGO
This is not the life a human being should suffer, Shimizu.

Shimizu looks at him, understands.

127 INT. NATURAL CAVE - DAY 127

The men are hunkered in a cave, sleeping out the daylight hours.

Shimizu, lying next to Saigo, whispers to him.

SHIMIZU
Saigo?

Saigo rolls over.

SHIMIZU
I have been thinking about what Lieutenant Colonel Nishi said. That I've never even met an American. It's true. I don't know anything about the enemy.

Shimizu looks towards the cave ceiling.

SHIMIZU
I was taught that the American soldier is weak, but he is not. I was told that they are savages, but that American who died -- his mother writes the same things that my mother would write.

SAIGO
I guess we're all just soldiers doing our job.

SHIMIZU
I want to do my duty to my country and my God, but I don't want to die for nothing.

Saigo is silent.

SHIMIZU
What do you think, Saigo? Tell me what you think.

SAIGO
People tell us we serve God by dying a valorous death on a battlefield. I don't know much, but if you ask me, I think God would be more pleased if we lived to experience the world He created. You're still young, Shimizu.

127 CONTINUED: 127

SAIGO (cont'd)
You haven't seen enough sunsets to appreciate all the beautiful shades of orange that change with each minute of each dusk. You haven't been to enough village festivals to taste their local flavors and to discern the subtle differences in their *obon* dances. You haven't been with a woman long enough to recognize her curves and valleys and to hear the sound of a baby's heart beat--your baby's heart beat beneath the skin of her belly. Shimizu, you haven't even begun to experience life to know what you are sacrificing.

Tears stream down Shimizu's cheeks.

SHIMIZU
Saigo, will you surrender with me?

128 EXT. NATURAL CAVE - NIGHT 128

The men crawl on their hands and knees. They have found a new bounty in the soil outside of the naturally formed cave.

They dig through the earth and whenever a beetle or worm is found, they pick it up and eat it.

Saigo and Shimizu whisper, separated from the rest of the men.

SAIGO
We'll have to be careful. They'll notice if we leave together. You go on first. I'll say that you've got dysentery. After a while, I'll tell them I'm going to check on you to make sure you're all right and then I'll join you. By the time anyone notices, we'll be long gone.

Shimizu nods.

SAIGO
Now give me your dysentery look.

SHIMIZU
What?

128 CONTINUED: 128

SAIGO
You have to look like you're sick.

Shimizu scrunches his face into a half frown, his eyelids flutter.

SAIGO
I said sick, not stupid.

Shimizu tries a different expression.

SAIGO
I guess that'll have to do.

129 INT. NATURAL CAVE - NIGHT 129

Saigo monitors the rest of the troops as they mill about. He signals for Shimizu to leave. Shimizu steals his way from the cave.

130 EXT. NATURAL CAVE - NIGHT 130

Shimizu runs out of the cave.

PRIVATE 2ND CLASS KANDA, another soldier, relieves himself on the hillside and makes his way back to the cave.

He sees Shimizu leaving.

KANDA
Where are you going?

Shimizu pauses.

SHIMIZU
I've got dysentery.

He puts on his dysentery face. Kanda stares at him in disbelief.

KANDA
You're going to surrender, aren't you?

Shimizu doesn't say anything.

KANDA
If you are, take me with you.

Shimizu looks surprised.

130 CONTINUED: 130

KANDA
I've had enough of this war.

SHIMIZU
Keep your voice down.

They start to leave.

131 INT. NATURAL CAVE - NIGHT 131

Saigo notices that Shimizu has left behind his lucky thousand-stitch belt along with his pack.

Saigo picks it up gravely.

Okubo spots Shimizu and Kanda.

OKUBO
Hey! Where are those two going?

He gets out of the cave and watches Shimizu and Kanda making their way away from the cave.

Saigo quickly follows after him.

SAIGO
I think Shimizu said something about not feeling well. He has dysentery, sir.

Okubo ignores Saigo.

OKUBO
Hey, you two stop!

The two start to run.

OKUBO
Stop!

He picks up his rifle.

SAIGO
Sir, maybe they just got spooked by something. An animal or a sound --

OKUBO
I said stop!

He SHOOTS and Kanda is hit, falling on the spot. Shimizu continues running.

131 CONTINUED: 131

OKUBO
Miura, you're on guard. Make sure this doesn't happen again.

MIURA, one of the soldiers, nods his head. Saigo looks crestfallen.

132 EXT. MARINE POSITION - NIGHT 132

MARINES are gathered at their position, smoking cigarettes, awaiting orders.

A NOISE in the distance causes them all to be on the alert, raising their rifles.

Shimizu appears before the marines, with his hands up, a torn piece of his white undershirt in his hand.

The soldiers approach him, shouting at him with their rifles pointed.

The Americans surround him. Shimizu falls to his knees.

They search him for weapons. Finding none, they let him stand back up.

Shimizu makes a motion for water. One of the marines hands him a canteen and Shimizu drinks thirstily.

Shimizu's hands are bound and he is taken to an area where another PRISONER also stands with his hands bound. They look at each other in surprise.

The Marines receive an order over their wire.

MARINE OFFICER
(in English)
We're moving out!

MARINE #2
What about the prisoners, sir?

Marine Officer points to MARINE #3 and MARINE #4.

MARINE OFFICER
You two stay behind and keep watch.

The two CURSE at this.

133 EXT. MARINE POSITION - LATER 133

Shimizu and the other Prisoner are seated on the floor.

SHIMIZU
Which unit are you from?

PRISONER
20th Special Machine Cannon Unit. We ran out of ammo and then they overtook us. I'm the only survivor. I heard Americans have real hot food.

SHIMIZU
It would be nice to eat food again.

He licks his lips.

In the b.g., the Marines assigned to keep watch discuss their situation in hushed tones.

MARINE #3
(in English)
What a bum rap. We're not going to be stuck watching 'em all night, are we?

MARINE #4
Maybe we can take them back to the beach.

MARINE #3
Are you kidding? We'd be sitting ducks with those two.

134 EXT. MARINE POSITION - LATER 134

Shimizu and the Prisoner are still talking.

PRISONER
I live in Yokohama. After this is over, you can come visit me.

SHIMIZU
That would be nice.

The two Marines approach the two prisoners. They hold up their rifles.

134 CONTINUED: 134

Unsuspecting, Shimizu and the Prisoner look up. The Prisoner is immediately SHOT.

Shimizu GASPS in surprise. Shimizu is SHOT next. His body goes still.

135 EXT. NATURAL CAVE - NIGHT 135

Okubo leads the troops out of the cave.

136 EXT. MARINE POSITION - NIGHT 136

Okubo notices FOOTPRINTS. Another spots a SPENT CIGARETTE. Okubo motions for the men to encircle the area. They cautiously approach the area with their rifles drawn.

Once they see that no one is there, they relax their rifles and check out the area.

SOLDIER
Lieutenant!

Okubo comes to where the Soldier motions. Shimizu and the other Prisoner's bodies lie dead in a make-shift ditch.

The other soldiers approach. Saigo sees the body of his friend. He drops into the ditch and picks up Shimizu's pale and lifeless body.

OKUBO
Let this be a lesson to anyone else who wants to surrender.

Saigo is in tears.

137 EXT. MARINE POSITION - LATER 137

The men leave the area, two fresh BURIAL MOUNDS behind them.

Saigo looks numb and listless as the soldiers trudge on.

138 EXT. HOT SPRINGS - NIGHT 138

The men gather around volcanic fumeroles with containers and jars.

138 CONTINUED: 138

They try to capture the steam in the containers, then lick them for any bits of condensation.

SAIGO
You need to wait until there is enough condensation.

The men ignore him, trying to get the drops into their mouths.

139 EXT. UNKNOWN CAVE - DAWN 139

Okubo has his men enter the cave.

OKUBO
We'll be at Kitano Point tomorrow. We'll sleep out the daylight hours here.

140 INT. UNKNOWN CAVE - DAY 140

The sleeping men are awoken by the pattering of RAINDROPS.

CAVE SOLDIER #1
It's raining!

He gets up and rushes towards the entrance of the cave.

OKUBO
Get back here!

The soldier halts. He peers through the entrance.

CAVE SOLDIER #1
Look! I can see it!

Unable to contain himself, he rushes out. The others follow to the entrance.

A SINGLE SHOT is heard. Upon hearing this, the others pull back.

A LOW RUMBLING is heard.

SAIGO
What is that?

CAVE SOLDIER #2
Thunder?

The sound gets LOUDER and LOUDER.

140 CONTINUED: 140

OKUBO
Bulldozers.

CAVE SOLDIER #2
They're coming this way.

OKUBO
Get back! Get back!

The men run towards the rear of the cave.

They keep their eye out towards the mouth of the cave.

A GRENADE is thrown in and the men hug the wall. The GRENADE EXPLODES, causing dirt from the roof to fall, but the men are safe.

The BULLDOZERS continue to come CLOSER and CLOSER, starting a RUMBLING VIBRATION throughout the whole cave.

The bulldozers shovel dirt over the entrance of the cave. The natural light dissipates, until everything is pitch black.

141 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - DAY 141

In Kuribayashi's cave, the sound of the BULLDOZERS can also be heard.

142 INT. UNKNOWN CAVE - DAY 142

The sound of the BULLDOZERS PASSES.

In the darkness, someone lights a match.

CAVE SOLDIER 2
They've buried us alive.

OKUBO
Then we'll dig. We dug in these caves, so we can dig out of them.

Okubo feels the walls of the cave.

OKUBO
The soil is soft here. We can dig an exit hole. Form a line.

The soldiers form an assembly line.

They start to dig with their rifles and their hands.

143 EXT. UNKNOWN CAVE - DAY 143

At last, the soldiers have dug through a hole, just wide enough to escape through.

They scrape more of the dirt out and one of the soldiers pops his head out. He looks around cautiously.

144 EXT. NORTH HILLS - DAY 144

The men trudge forward, haggard and limping.

They come upon an impasse. A line of Marines SHOOTING towards the caves.

OKUBO
We need to get through the crossfire to reach Kitano Point and join our forces on the other side.

He draws a map in the sand.

OKUBO
There's no way in without passing through open area and getting shot at. So we'll go to this nearby cave and make our way from there. We'll have to pass through the rear line of the enemy. We can't avoid a confrontation.

The men make their way.

145 EXT. NORTH HILLS - DAY 145

The men prepare themselves for the run to the caves.

OKUBO
We'll have to make every bullet count, so don't shoot recklessly.

The soldiers make a rushing charge for the hills. GUNFIRE ERUPTS.

Okubo leads the charge. He SHOOTS down two Americans.

Men go down on both sides.

Saigo rushes forward, nervous. Running quickly in a zig zag motion, he is able to dodge BULLETS.

145 CONTINUED: 145

Okubo pulls the trigger of his PISTOL, but it CLICKS empty. He throws the pistol down.

A group of Americans aim their rifles towards him. Okubo pulls a grenade, yells and charges straight at them.

The Americans send a BARRAGE OF BULLETS, riddling Okubo's body before he falls towards them.

Okubo's GRENADE EXPLODES.

Saigo and other troop members manage to cross through, running towards the safety of a cave.

146 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - DAY 146

FOOTSTEPS RUNNING along the corridor alert Kuribayashi and his staff. They all stand with worried expressions.

A GUARD appears.

GUARD
Sir, survivors of the 26th Tank Regiment are here.

Saigo and his men, dirty, haggard and suffering effects of malnutrition, make their way down the tunnel.

Kuribayashi looks at them amazed.

KURIBAYASHI
Are there no officers? Where is Lt. Colonel Nishi?

The men are silent.

Kuribayashi looks genuinely saddened.

KURIBAYASHI
I see. Well, you all did a good job making it over here.

He looks at the sad state of the men.

KURIBAYASHI
Fujita, what's the status of our water rations?

The men look up eagerly at this. Lt. Fujita falters.

KURIBAYASHI
Fujita?

146 CONTINUED: 146

LT. FUJITA
There are no water rations, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
What about the groups we sent out yesterday for water?

LT. FUJITA
None came back.

The men go back to their dejected states. Kuribayashi looks disheartened.

KURIBAYASHI
Well, come and rest.

SAIGO
Thank you, sir.

The men find a place to sit down. Devoid of energy.

Kuribayashi looks at Saigo.

KURIBAYASHI
You look familiar. Aren't you the one whose head I saved?

SAIGO
Yes, sir. I am eternally grateful.

KURIBAYASHI
It's a miracle that you've made it this far.

SAIGO
That was the second time, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
The second time?

SAIGO
That was the second time you saved me. The first time was on the beach the day you arrived.

Kuribayashi laughs.

KURIBAYASHI
Is that so? Well, everything comes in threes. So I may have to save you again.

147 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - NIGHT 147

Saigo and the men rest on the floor of the cave. Some of the men look deathly ill.

A medic checks the pulse of some of them and cover the ones that are dead.

Saigo writes on a piece of paper.

SAIGO (V.O.)
Hanako, I know you will probably never see this letter, but it comforts me to talk to you. We have been without food or water for five days now. We are going through unspeakable measures to keep ourselves alive.

One of the men gets up, pees into a cup. Then, grimacing, he drinks his own urine.

SAIGO (V.O.)
There seems to be no way out now. I have tried my best. I worry about who will take care of you and the baby.

Lt. Fujita enters the cave.

LT. FUJITA
You there. Dig up some worms.

148 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S QUARTERS - NIGHT 148

Kuribayashi writes out his last wire.

KURIBAYASHI (V.O.)
The battle is approaching its end. Since the enemy's landing, even the gods would weep at the bravery of the officers and men under my command. Now there is no more ammunition, no more water. All the survivors will engage in a general attack. Praying to God for the final victory and safety of our motherland, let me say "sayonara" everlastingly...

Saigo enters the room. He brings in a pitiful plate of worms, cut into sections.

148 CONTINUED: 148

SAIGO
There wasn't much we could dig up, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
Thank you.

Saigo is about to leave.

KURIBAYASHI
Saigo.

SAIGO
Yes, sir?

KURIBAYASHI
It was quite a journey you've made all the way from Suribachi.

SAIGO
Yes, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
You must be quite a soldier.

SAIGO
Oh no, sir. I am just a simple baker. I don't know much.

KURIBAYASHI
You're a baker?

SAIGO
Well, I was one back in Yokote.

KURIBAYASHI
Do you have family back home?

SAIGO
Just my wife and a little baby girl born last summer. I haven't seen her yet.

KURIBAYASHI
Funny, Saigo, I have just realized that the irony of being a soldier is that what compels us to do our duty is our families and it is likewise the thought of our families that makes it difficult to fulfill it.

Kuribayashi is quiet for a moment. He takes out a Chinese song book.

148 CONTINUED: (2) 148

KURIBAYASHI
Saigo, do you like Chinese poetry?

SAIGO
I'm afraid I don't know much about poetry, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
Would you like to stay and listen?

SAIGO
Yes, sir. I would like that.

Kuribayashi motions to the floor.

KURIBAYASHI
Sit down.

Saigo complies.

Kuribayashi begins singing translated Chinese poetry.

KURIBAYASHI
'No end to this marching, forever and ever...
In life we are separated from one another,
Parted by a thousand and ten thousand li,
Each a different corner of the sky,
The road so long, so perilous.
Who knows when we shall see each other again?'

Saigo listens quietly. Tears begin to run down his face.

Kuribayashi stops when he notices Saigo crying.

SAIGO
Sorry, sir.

Kuribayashi nods, closes the book.

149 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - NIGHT 149

The remaining rag tag group of soldiers gather in formation in the cave.

Kuribayashi addresses them. His voice is weaker than in days past.

149 CONTINUED: 149

KURIBAYASHI
Our garrison will make a general attack against the enemy. Starting time will be 0600 hours. Until now, you men have overcome any and all difficulties, obeyed my orders and fought gallantly against an enemy with overwhelming supplies. The loss of this island means that Yankee military boots will soon tread on our motherland. However, you can all be proud that you have acted as honorable warriors of the Imperial Empire, fighting to the last. No one is to return from this mission. Kill as many enemies as possible and fight for your seventh life.

The soldiers look glum, knowing they are to die. Saigo looks especially disheartened.

KURIBAYASHI
Dismissed.

The soldiers fall out. Lt. Fujita approaches Kuribayashi.

LT. FUJITA
Sir, we are getting a radio transmission from Japan.

150 INT. RADIO ROOM - NIGHT 150

The sound of a STATIC-FILLED BROADCAST can be heard.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
This is a special song for General Kuribayashi and his men fighting bravely at *Iwo Tou* from the children of his hometown in Nagano Prefecture.

The voices of schoolchildren singing the "Song of Iwo Defense" plays over the radio.

SCHOOLCHILDREN (V.O.)
'Where dark tides billow in the ocean,
A wink-shaped isle of mighty fame,
Guards the gateway to our empire:
Iwo Jima is its name...'

150 CONTINUED: 150

Kuribayashi breaks down.

151 EXT. NEAR KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - MORNING 151

Saigo, with a force of about 300 rag tag men - many without guns, but holding swords or sticks, are gathered at the entrance to the cave.

Kuribayashi inspects them.

KURIBAYASHI
Shuppatsu!

The troops start to exit the cave and make their way down the slope, looking haggard, but determined.

Kuribayashi stops Saigo.

KURIBAYASHI
Saigo, you will remain here. I have another task for you.

Saigo looks surprised.

SAIGO
Yes, sir.

KURIBAYASHI
You see, everything comes in threes.

152 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - MORNING 152

Kuribayashi and Lt. Fujita gather all of their documentation -- plans, code books, maps, etc.

KURIBAYASHI
Saigo, start a fire and make sure all of these documents are burned.

SAIGO
Yes, sir.

153 EXT. AIR FORCE AND SEABEE ENCAMPMENT - MORNING 153

The troops rush forward, giving their last energy into their run towards the enemy.

The Marines and workers are surprised by the attack, some resting in their cots.

153 CONTINUED: 153

The last of Kuribayashi's force wield their instruments holding nothing back.

Some are shot down, but not before wreaking their own havoc.

154 EXT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - MORNING 154

Kuribayashi, with Lt. Fujita at his side, watches with binoculars.

155 INSIDE THE CAVE 155

Saigo has a fire going, places all the documentation into the fire.

As he picks up a stack of papers, numerous drawings fall to the floor.

Saigo looks at them. They are Kuribayashi's sketches.

156 OUTSIDE THE CAVE 156

The CRIES of DYING FIGHTERS ECHO through the canyons.

Kuribayashi puts down his binoculars, sadness in his eyes.

157 AIR FORCE AND SEABEE ENCAMPMENT 157

The camp is littered with dead bodies. The Americans, now awake and alert, have taken the upper hand and overwhelm the remnants of the Japanese army with artillery.

158 OUTSIDE THE CAVE 158

Kuribayashi turns to Fujita. He hands Fujita a samurai sword. A secret pact between them.

159 INSIDE THE CAVE 159

Saigo continues burning documents. He comes upon a LEATHER SATCHEL, full of mail. It is filled with undelivered postcards and letters.

He places his letter to his wife into the sack, along with Kuribayashi's sketches.

159 CONTINUED: 159

He is about to throw the whole thing into the fire, then stops.

There is a depression in the floor where supplies had been kept. He takes a shovel and starts digging the hole wider.

160 EXT. CLEARING - DAY 160

Kuribayashi faces north toward the Imperial Palace.

He kneels on the ground and bows three times. Lt. Fujita stands above him, still holding the samurai sword.

161 INT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - DAY 161

Saigo finishes burying the mail sack into the ground. WE SEE it is the same leather satchel as was uncovered in the first scene.

162 EXT. CLEARING - DAY 162

Kuribayashi pulls out a hara-kiri knife. He strips his shirt off.

KURIBAYASHI
Forgive me Emperor for my failures.

Kuribayashi takes a deep breath, then thrusts the knife into his abdomen. In his weakened state, he is unable to pierce his stomach, making only a scratch.

Yelling, he continues to thrust the knife into himself.

163 EXT. ENTRANCE OF CAVE - DAY 163

As smoke fills the enclosure, Saigo emerges from the entrance to the cave.

He hears KURIBAYASHI'S YELLS and heads towards the direction of the clearing.

164 EXT. CLEARING - DAY 164

Kuribayashi finally makes a deep enough incision, then pulls from left to right. Blood spurts out. His face is contorted in pain.

164 CONTINUED: 164

Fujita lifts his sword up to do the final honors of chopping off his head.

165 EXT. LOWER HILL - DAY 165

A MARINE SHARPSHOOTER, alerted by the smoke coming from the cave, does a survey across the hill and spots the two men. He sees Fujita lifting his sword to chop the head off of Kuribayashi.

Shocked, he picks his RIFLE up and aims through the scope for Fujita. He SHOOTS.

166 EXT. CLEARING - DAY 166

Fujita falls over dead.

Saigo witnesses this, falls to his knees in shock.

Kuribayashi is dying a painful death, blood pouring out of his guts.

Saigo ducks down onto the ground and approaches Kuribayashi.

SAIGO
General Kuribayashi.

KURIBAYASHI
(struggling)
Tell me, Saigo, is this still Japanese soil?

Saigo looks out upon the landscape, eerily desolate and silent, filled with smoke and bodies of the dead.

SAIGO
Yes, sir. We have not yet surrendered.

Kuribayashi attempts a smile.

KURIBAYASHI
I served in many far places, but I always hoped to die in my home country.

He grips Saigo's arm.

KURIBAYASHI
Hold on to Japan for as long as possible.

166 CONTINUED: 166

Kuribayashi releases his grip and looks off into the distance. He sees a stretch of emptiness.

The empty clearing transitions into a long stretch of road across the PLAINS OF TEXAS.

167 FLASHBACK - EXT. FORT BLISS, TEXAS (NIGHT) 167

Kuribayashi's car travels across the silent plains in the darkness.

KURIBAYASHI (V.O.)
Taro, tonight I attended a grand farewell party in my honor with many American friends. When the night was over, they wished me well and though I'm glad to be going home, I felt a bit sad to say Goodbye. Then I had to make the long drive back to my apartment. If you were here, Taro, I would put you in the passenger's seat. And Yoko and your mother would be in the back. But it's lonely driving all by myself.

END OF FLASHBACK.

BACK TO CLEARING

Kuribayashi's eyes glaze and he is dead.

SAIGO
General!

168 EXT. BEHIND THE MOUNTAIN - DAY 168

Saigo struggles, as he drags Kuribayashi's body over to an area he has picked out.

With his shovel, he digs a hole.

169 EXT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - DAY 169

A group of SWEEP MARINES discover the cave, still smoking from the fire.

The Marines surround the cave, their rifles ready.

169 CONTINUED: 169

MARINE
Come out and surrender!

There is no response. The Marine nods to another, who throws in a grenade.

170 EXT. BEHIND THE MOUNTAIN 170

Saigo has dug a grave deep enough. He puts down his shovel and drags Kuribayashi's body.

171 EXT. KURIBAYASHI'S CAVE - DAY 171

The Marines have rigged up a bomb. They run to a safe position.

The MASSIVE EXPLOSION causes the entire CAVE MOUTH to COLLAPSE.

172 EXT. BEHIND THE MOUNTAIN 172

Saigo hears the EXPLOSION. He quickly finishes covering the grave.

He bows.

173 EXT. CLEARING - DAY 173

Marines come upon the body of Lt. Fujita.

MARINE #1
Careful. His body could be booby-trapped.

They approach carefully.

One of the Marines sees the trail from Saigo dragging Kuribayashi's body. He motions to his buddies.

The others follow him.

174 CLEARING - LATER 174

Saigo is taken by surprise as he emerges from behind the mountains. He has no gun or weapon, except for the shovel.

The Marines aim their rifles at him.

174 CONTINUED: 174

Saigo stands still for a moment, at a loss. He glances back towards where his General's body lies.

Finally, he lifts his shovel and waves it at them, ready to fight.

The Marines look at each other, wondering whether to shoot or let the poor, haggard soul live.

Saigo comes forward, waving his shovel this way and that.

MARINE
(in English)
Shall I shoot him, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT
No, don't shoot.

Saigo growls like a mad man. Lieutenant circles behind Saigo.

Finally, Lieutenant knocks him over the head with the butt of his gun.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

175 EXT. BEACH - DUSK 175

Saigo regains consciousness and squints his eyes open.

He lies on a stretcher, awaiting transport to a naval ship.

He is bedazzled by the striking colors of an orange sunset.

176 INT. ITO'S CAVE - DUSK 176

A pitch dark cave.

LIGHT suddenly floods the hole.

Lt. Ito lies sleeping in the cave, grimy and half naked. He wakes up and is blinded by the light.

MARINES carrying flashlights and rifles stare at him.

Lt. Ito slowly puts up his hands in surrender.

177 INT. IWO JIMA TUNNEL - DAY - 2006 177

The two Excavators unearth the leather satchel that Saigo had buried over fifty years ago.

They pull the bag out of the hole.

The bag has deteriorated and letters flutter to the ground -- hundreds of undelivered letters.

The O.S. voices of soldiers OVERLAP each other, reading their letters. To their mothers, their wives, their children.

SOLDIER #1 (V.O.)
Father, I resolve to fight to the end for my Emperor and my country. I shall honor our family name.

SOLDIER #2 (V.O.)
Mother, I hope this money will help, as it is all I have left. I won't be needing anything from now on.

SOLDIER #3 (V.O.)
Junko, remember your older brother, and take care of Mother and Father. When the bombs come, remember to run where it will be safe from fire.

SOLDIER #4 (V.O.)
I hope to die an honorable soldier.

Excavator #2 pulls from the bag, the SKETCHES that Kuribayashi had drawn.

CLOSE ON THE SKETCHES as they are handed off to:

178 INT. SHINDO'S HOUSE, TEA ROOM - DAY 178

Kuribayashi's grandson, YOSHITAKA SHINDO, takes the sketches from Excavator #2, who is now dressed in a suit.

EXCAVATOR #2
These sketches by your grandfather were found buried in one of the caves.

178 CONTINUED: 178

Shindo looks at the sketches. Doodles of Kuribayashi's wife and children, smiling, playing. A picture of an automobile, a dinner party. Happier days. Tears start to well in Shindo's eyes.

POSTSCRIPT

The battle for Iwo Jima lasted thirty-six days. The Americans had expected to take the island in five days. Of the roughly 21,000 Japanese troops that defended Iwo Jima, only a little over 1,000 survived. So far, only 8,000 of the bodies have been recovered and excavation continues today to find the remaining 12,000 bodies. Personal items taken as souvenirs are also still being sought for their return to surviving relatives.

FADE OUT.

THE END